

PlayStation®2

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE - AUSTRALIA

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PS3

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- Path of Neo
- Tony Hawk 7
- The Warriors
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- Burnout: Revenge

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ISSUE 42 JULY 2005
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42

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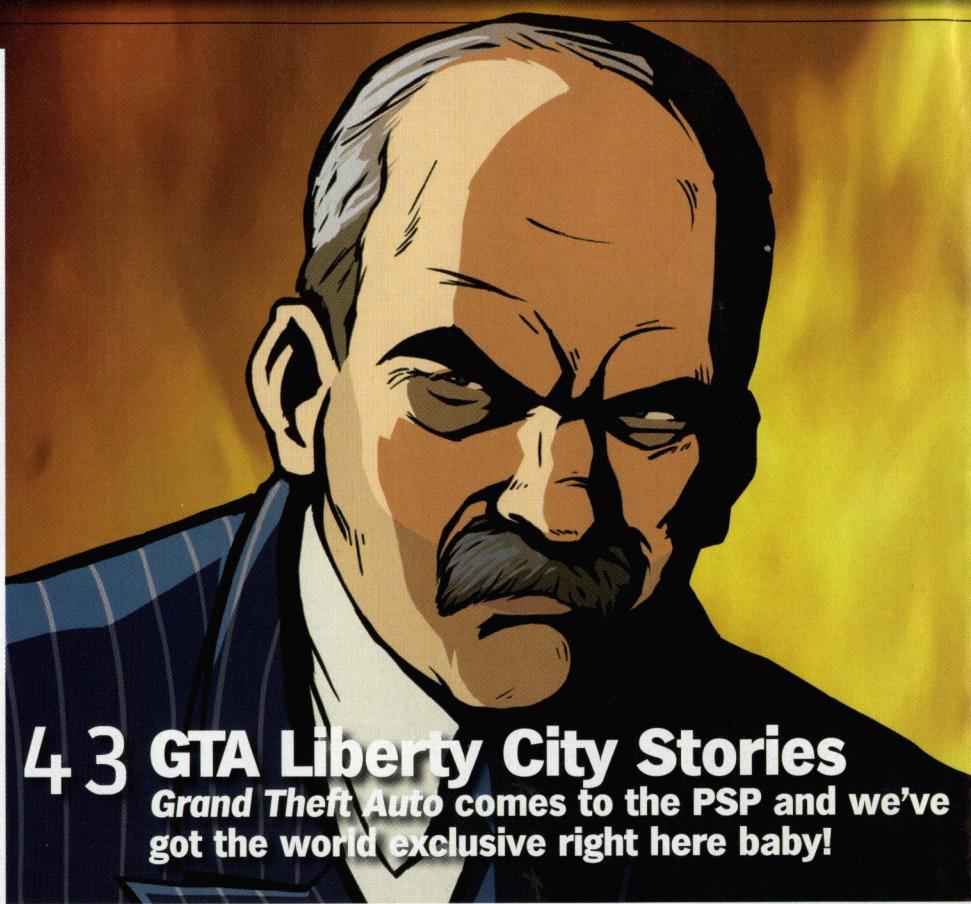
**IN CINEMAS
JULY 7**

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PlayStation.2

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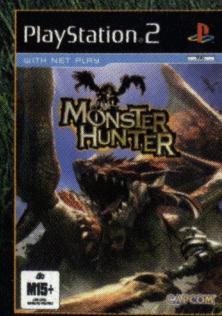
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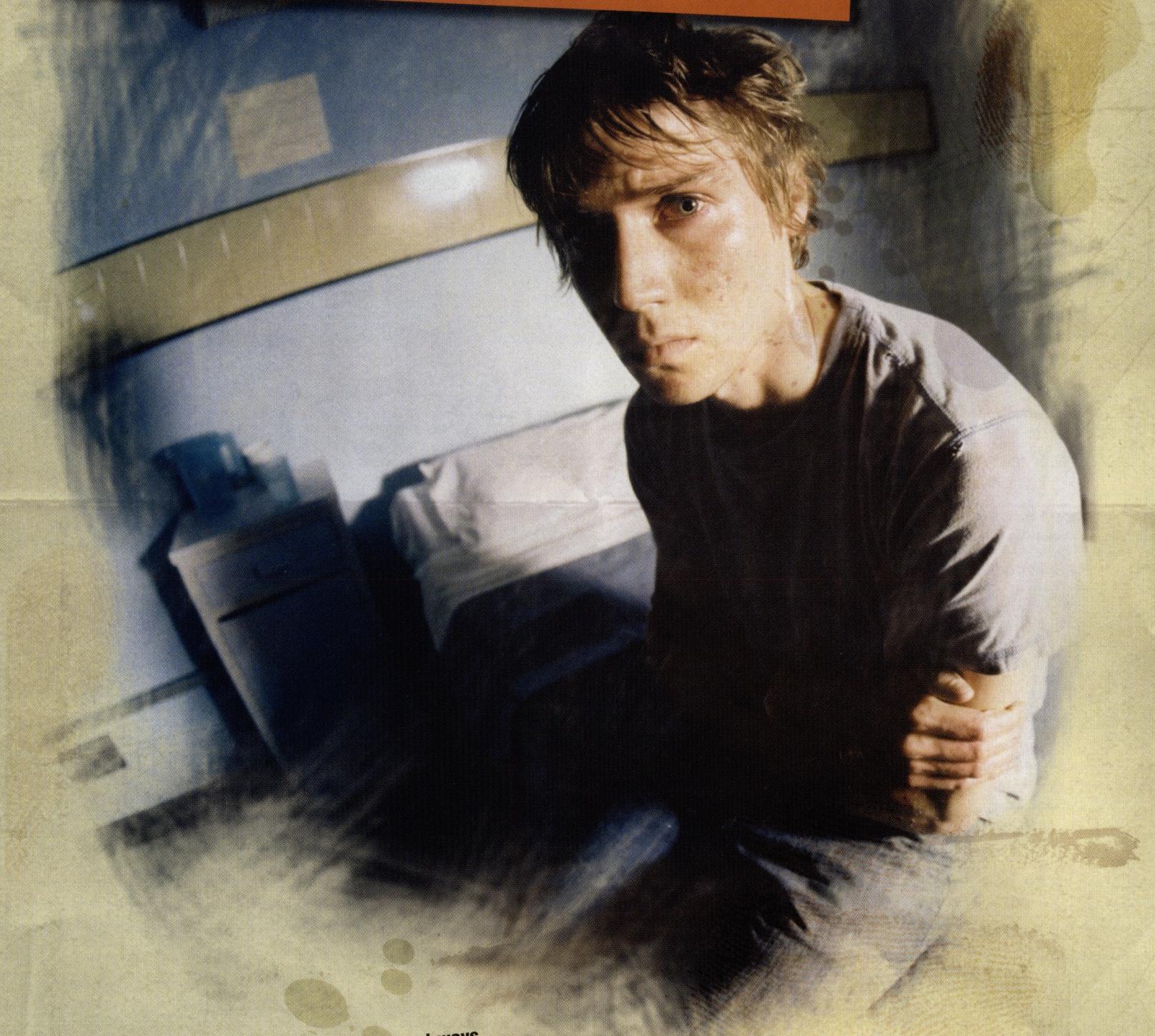
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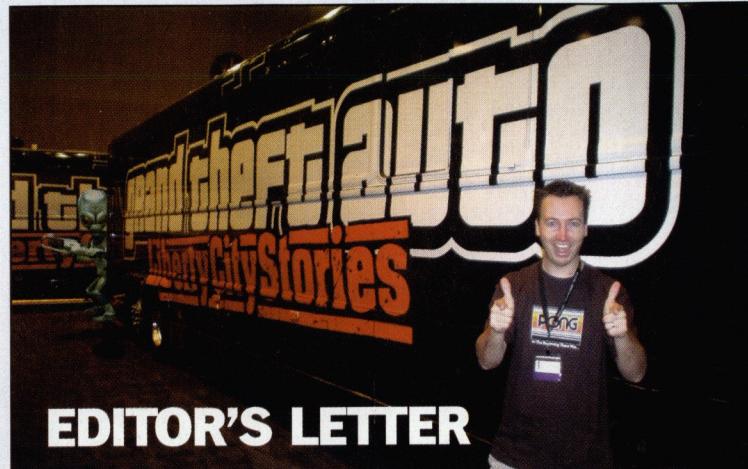
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EDITOR'S LETTER

Pew. We made it! It was touch and go for a while there but we've finally managed to wrap up the busiest mag of the year. This month has been one long roller coaster of gaming insanity. With not one, not two, but three PlayStation consoles dazzling us with their white-hot games at this year's Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3) - every time we thought we'd covered every single PlayStation game in existence, another stunner would land in our laps, just begging for a preview. How could we say no? The final count came in at a whopping 104 games! That's a whole lotta gaming for your dollar right there!

I've got to say, I had some pretty huge expectations for Sony's PlayStation 3. Even after five years the PS2 is still teaching me new tricks and

coming up with games I never thought were possible. So, to usher in a whole new generation of gaming I knew the PS3 needed to be something really special. Despite these lofty expectations I was still genuinely shocked by PS3's achievements. It packs more computing power than NASA into a package with sexier curves than Natalie Portman's tank top. Do yourself a favour - flick to page 54 and take a look at the future. Just 238 sleeps to go...

Coming out a little sooner than the PS3 will be Rockstar's pocket masterpiece. You might have heard of it - *Grand Theft Auto Liberty City Stories*? What's that? You'd give your left nut for a look at the new GTA? Well, you will need a pair of scissors, but thankfully the only thing you'll need to cut off is the paper seal on our world exclusive first look. And, oh is it good!

Unless you're Ron Jeremy this is definitely the biggest thing you'll ever have in your pants!

Catch you next month!

NARAYAN PATTISON

Editor

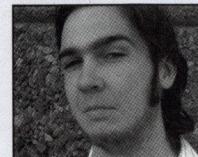


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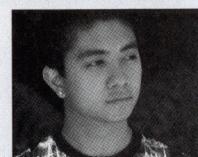
WHAT HAVE WE BEEN UP TO?



JOSH MONAGHAN
I'm all about saving for my European adventure. The drinking, the food, the Spanish beaches. Oh I forgot, definitely the culture - yeah, that's why I'm going again.



LUKE REILLY
The street-violence shenanigans last month had me feeling nostalgic for my old job in customer service. The customer wasn't always right, and it was my duty to inform them of that.



PHILLIP JORGE
I'm still hurting about being left behind while the rest of the gang got to go to LA for E3. That Playboy Mansion party had my name all over it! When will it be my turn?



TRISTAN OGILVIE
I've caught the T-Virus from Naz and now I'm all about Resident Evil 4. Just to reiterate; the T-Virus is not the one that's passed on by "kissing on the mouth".



PAUL FREW
I'm sticking with the 'woman-heating' business I started last month and am even doing a two-for-the-price-of-one deal. Obviously, I'm busy taking a lot of extra work.



JAMES ELLIS
I almost beat down two work experience kids with a lead pipe. If anyone asks what the definition of lucrative is again, I will smash their face into a car windscreen. Woosah!

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JAW-DROPPING

THREE KINGS

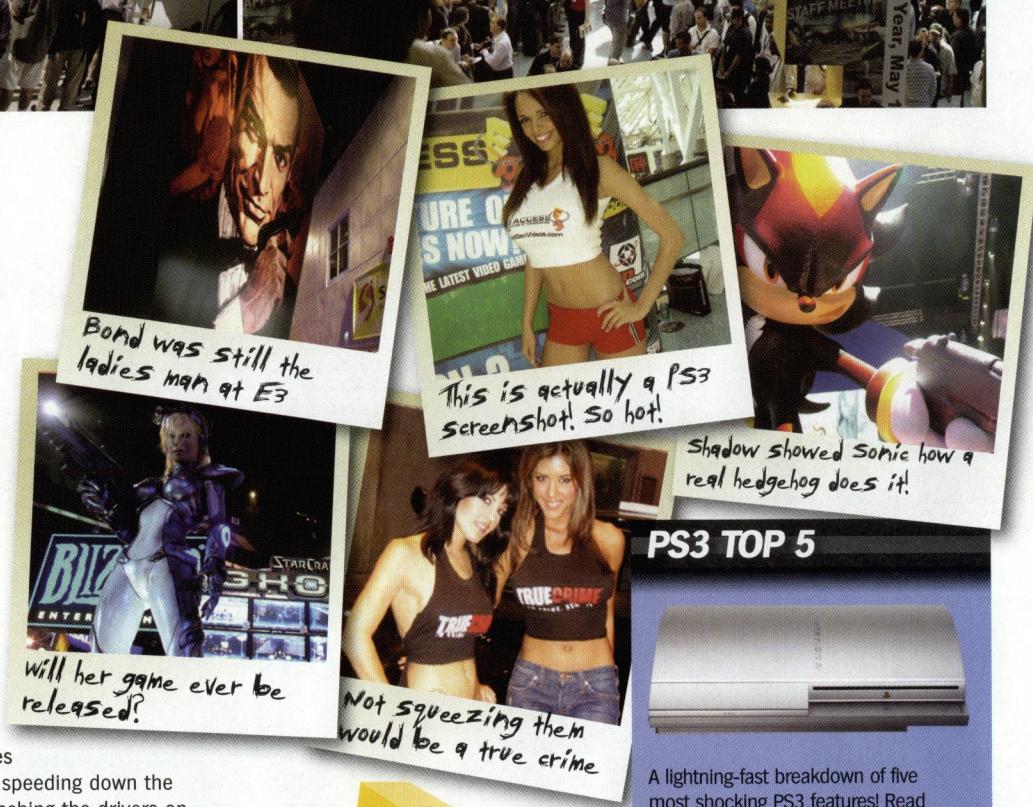
E3 2005 was ruled by Sony's three Kings: PS2, PSP and PS3! Talk about an unbeatable line-up!

Nobody could have predicted this! Not even a 'Stephen Hawking, Professor Xavier and Nostradamus think tank' could have sketched out even a rough blueprint for Sony's PlayStation 3! While everyone expected a couple of announcements and maybe even a few specs, Sony blew its competitors off the radar with its PS3 demonstration. In-game demos that put some Hollywood blockbusters to shame, a comprehensive breakdown of the system's capabilities, and even the spanking new box and controller were all shown off to thundering cheers!

After staking the next-generation scene with a flag that was so big it could be seen from space, Sony moved onto its sleek PlayStation Portable. The highlight of the PSP presentation was *Pursuit Force*, a GTA-meets-Burnout action game that saw its hero jumping

from motorcycles onto cars while speeding down the highway, then bashing the drivers on the dashboard before tossing them onto the roadside. That's how we roll! The PSP also impressed with the announcement that there will be 50 DVD-quality UMD movies available by Christmas. Wirelessly downloading new content for *Wipeout Pure* in less than a minute was also very, very cool.

As you'd expect, the quality of PS2 games shifted into super high gear at E3 2005. Demonstrating a flawlessly cinematic presentation and a tidal wave of adrenalin, Ubisoft's *King Kong* was easily the PS2 game of the show! *Black* is a first-person shooter by the *Burnout* team that was so intense it made Neo's lobby shootout in the original *Matrix* movie look tame. One thing's for sure, 2005 is going to be the King Kong of gaming! ▶ NP



A lightning-fast breakdown of five most shocking PS3 features! Read them, then get your ass to page 54 for our exclusive report! Now, dammit!

- 1 – Photo-realistic HD graphics!
- 2 – Twice as powerful as Xbox 360!
- 3 – Runs two TVs at once!
- 4 – Swap content from PS3 to PSP (even from different countries!)
- 5 – Plays Blu-ray discs (the future of DVDs – six times as big)



expo



Driver is returning for a fourth instalment in 2006. Touted as a return to gameplay roots, it'll feature unprecedented vehicle dynamics and physics and take place in

Uncovering the latest PS2 news every month

RPG SQUARED

NOT-SO-FINAL FANTASY

This info is the final straw. Now we're excited.

What would E3 be without new *Final Fantasy* news? Not nearly as interesting or exciting, that's what. This year, the mighty Square Enix unveiled new info on two upcoming *Final Fantasy* games. And both are as exciting as one another.

Final Fantasy XII will be bigger, bolder and more beautiful than any previous installment in the series and will come with a fast-paced action combat system. Enemy AI will be improved and airships are set to play a vital role in the unfolding of the story. Throw in a stylish Mediterranean setting with a soundtrack to match, and *Final Fantasy XII* is sure to be the FFX successor we all hoped it would be.

Square Enix's other *Final Fantasy* RPG at the show was none other than *Dirge of Cerberus*. A sequel of sorts, it is set three years after the events of *Final Fantasy VII*, and lets you take control of Vincent. Vincent is, let's face it, the

coolest *Final Fantasy* character ever conceived. If his presence alone doesn't have you dancing through the streets, we're surprised you've read this far. We did mention these were kooky RPGs from Japan, didn't we?

Although the other *Final Fantasy VII* characters will make guest appearances, Vincent and his shiny guns are definitely taking the lead role in this adventure. *Devil May Cry* meets Square Enix RPG? Yeah, that's what we thought too. **MS**

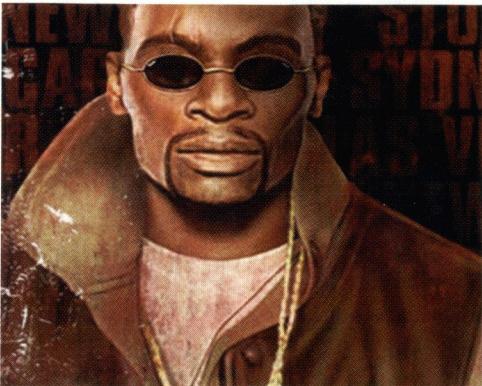


CRIMINAL

NEW CRIME

The truth wasn't out there...

We wish we could tell you a little about Activision's follow-up to the successful *True Crime: Streets of LA*, but we can't. Not because we're not allowed to – it's just that bugger all about it has been released. We know it's going to be huge and that Activision has moved members of other teams to Luxflux to help get it out the door – but we assume it just wasn't quite ready to display yet. At this point it looks like Nick Kang has been ditched in favour of Marcus Reed, an African-American badass with a serious attitude problem. Activision hasn't revealed the location yet but it's running a competition to guess the city as we type this. Don't get excited, it's only for US residents. Damn those stupid US residents and their US residencies... **LR**



New York City. Some of us actually liked Driv3r, so we're glad its critical panning didn't kill the franchise.

DETENTION!

BACK TO SCHOOL

Kids say the darndest things...

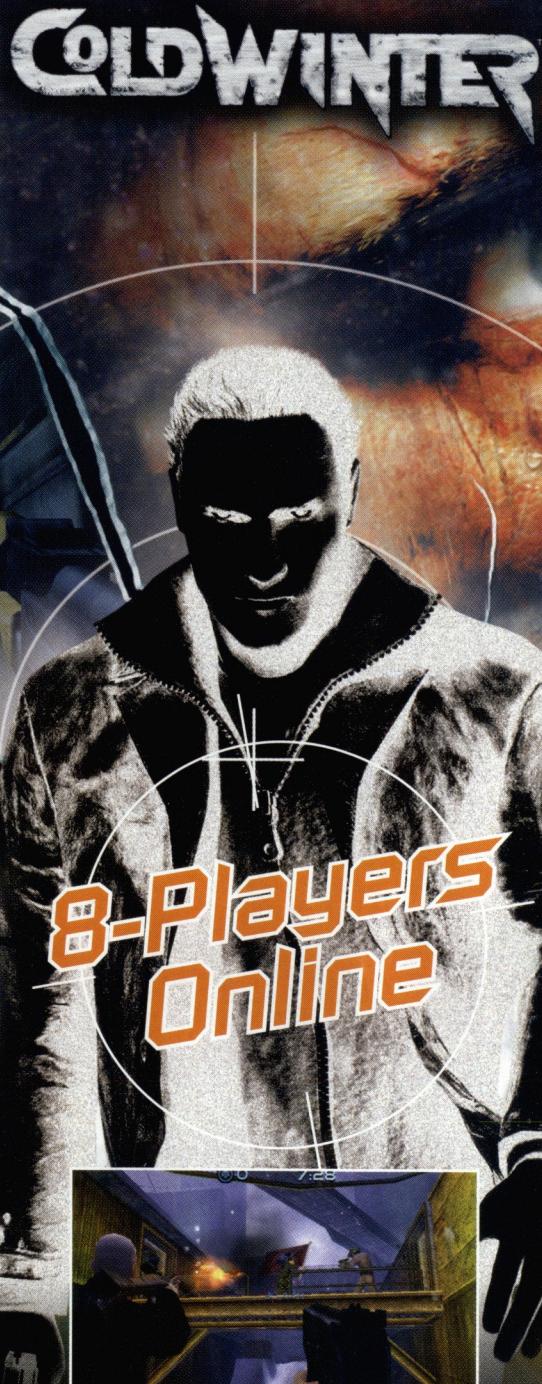
Remember that kid who always used to tell you your mum was fat back in school? Here's your chance to get back at him – indirectly, at least. Rockstar has just unveiled *Bully*, the debut project from Rockstar Vancouver. Under wraps for quite some time, Rockstar was quick to stress *Bully* is quite unlike anything it has done before, taking the groundbreaking gameplay Rockstar titles are renowned for and placing it back in the schoolyard.

Bully is the tale of Jimmy Hopkins, a young lad at Bullworth Academy – a snooty private school as bent as a banana. You'll have to stand up to cruel classmates and bullies, avoid the odd vindictive teacher and even chase a bit of skirt.

The bell should ring for *Bully* in October, but be sure to check back next month for our exclusive preview. **LR**



"Your mum's so fat she's got her own postcode"



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Info Nudge

Fill in the speech bubble WINNER!



Wow, I've never had one with handlebars before! Gives me something to hang onto - woof!

WINNERS
 Congratulations to Aaron Hay of New Zealand for his winning entry. That whole 'handlebar' gag popped up a few times but this was the easiest to add that tiny bit of *Blackadder* flavour to the end!

LEGO Star Wars - G Pickthall, VIC, B Robertson, VIC, K French, QLD, J Brophy, VIC, B Di Manno, NSW, F Kemp, VIC, J Gardiner, NSW, E Grönlund, NSW, E Garrett, VIC, G Aguirre, QLD

Saw Packs - R George, VIC, K Warwick, QLD, B Hardy, VIC, J Stoldt, WA, L Braithwaite, QLD

SHARK BAIT
Jaws Unleashed was finally shown at E3. It's kind of like *Ecco the Dolphin*, but with less bubble popping and more limb digesting. From what we saw in *Jaws Unleashed* you'll be blowing harpoons from Japanese fishermen, snacking on skinny-dipping school girls and blowing up buildings. That's right, blowing up buildings. We saw Jaws, a friggin shark, smash his nose against the column support, which just so happens to be underwater, and blow up a building like George W. Bush had stopped by. We'll have to wait and see if this one sinks or swims.



TIME FOR A BEATING
 The people who brought you the awesome *Maximo* are now resurrecting another classic, *Final Fight*. You'll be kicking ass with Kyle Travers, brother to Cody of the original game, which is who you're tracking down. The key to *Final Fight* however won't be how many skulls you can crack; it'll be about getting respect. Gaining respect will allow you to unlock new fighting manoeuvres, earn support from fellow fighters and clues on how to find your brother. There'll also be some unique fighting modes like counter-time, which slows down time to pull off special moves, and instinct time, which speeds up time to improve accuracy. *Final Fight* looks like it's gonna kick ass.

AR, ME HEARTIES!
 Any pirate worth a damn is after one thing, booty. Whether it's a hoard of buried treasure or Keira Knightley - the aim is the same. Find it, steal it, take it home and make it yours and show anyone who gets in your way the pointy end of your sword. Well, prepare to step into the swashbuckling boots of "Captain" Jack Sparrow. In *Pirates of the Caribbean: The Legend of Jack Sparrow* where you'll pilfer, pillage and plunder your way through his early years. Carve a path through enemy pirates, avoid capture by The Royal Navy and remember to adhere to The Code. We'll even find out if Jack really did sack Nassau port without firing a single shot. It's a pirate's life for us in Q3 next year... Yo Ho!

ISLAND GETAWAY

TERRORISE THIS!

Just Cause is coming to PS2!

After months of hearing about a possible GTA-style game on an Island, Eidos finally released details of its latest action title *Just Cause*, and it looks like it could be the one to match Rockstar's killer franchise. In *Just Cause*, you'll star as CIA agent Rico Rodriguez. Rico's been dropped on San Esperito to overthrow the government, who is suspected of packing some serious weapons of mass destruction.

There's no set way to do this however. You choose how you're going to take them down. You can go in Schwarzenegger-style and blow away politician after politician all by yourself. Or you can swarm in with an army of fighter jets and take out hot spots from the sky. You do whatever you think is the right decision. There'll be plenty of weapons to help you make that decision too. Machine guns, rocket launchers and tanks are just some of the items we saw but apparently there are loads more cool stuff we don't even know about.

The best part of *Just Cause* is that there is no wrong

way of completing a mission, as long as you get the job done and get out in one piece. This might be tough considering the beauty of San Esperito. The island is 1,255 square miles of pure action so there'll be plenty to do and plenty to see. Stunning mountain drops, dense jungles, and beaches that could only be made more perfect if they were littered with sunbathers from a nudist colony. Strictly female, of course.

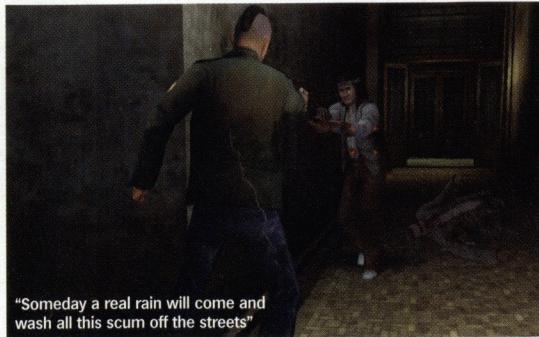
There is still even more to discover about *Just Cause*. We guess we'll just have to hang out on some tropical islands for, er... research and see if we can dig up any more details. **PF**

FARE GO

CRAZY TAXI

"You talkin' to me?"

To coincide with the 30th anniversary of Martin Scorsese's classic film, *Taxi Driver*: *The Game* will put you into the disturbed mind of NYC cabbie Travis Bickle - arguably one of Robert DeNiro's most powerful performances. Picking up two months after the end of events in the flick, Bickle is still obsessed with Betsy, a campaign worker who wants nothing to do with him. When Betsy is gunned down, Bickle spirals even more out of control as he scours the streets searching for her killers. *Taxi Driver* will feature the same open-city environment we've come to enjoy in the likes of *GTA* and *The Getaway* and will be split between driving and on-foot action. When you're not mowing down pimps and thugs you can ferry passengers around the city, just like a real NYC taxi driver - only you won't have to actually clean the love stains from the back seat afterwards. **LR**

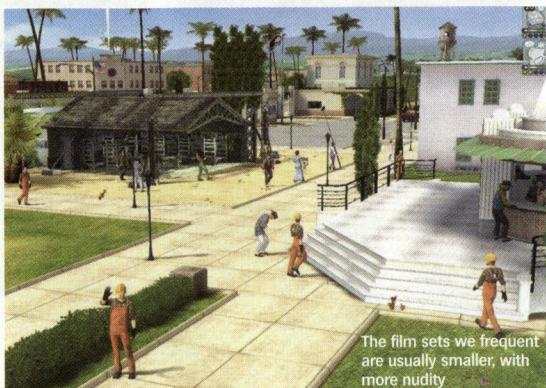


BLOCKBUSTER

LIGHTS! CAMERA! ACTION!

Hollywood hits PS2

Just like *Starcraft: Ghost*, *The Movies* also made its annual appearance at E3. However the game looked better than it ever has. For those who are unfamiliar with the title, *The Movies* puts you in charge of your own film studio. You'll perform various tasks including writing blockbuster scripts, hiring Hollywood's finest stars and keeping them out of trouble and the media spotlight. If they do happen to make the tabloids, then it's also your job to fix it with a trip to the Betty Ford Clinic or a spot of plastic surgery. It's been a while coming but Activision says it will be out in October - hopefully that means October this year. **PF**



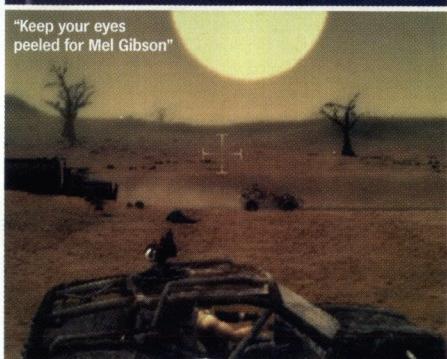
HOMEGROWN

LOCAL GAMES AT E3

Aussie-made wares hit LA

There was plenty to keep us a little homesick during E3 this year with a stack of titles from local development studios on display. *Destroy All Humans!* from Brisbane-based Pandemic (reviewed on page 66) was a hit, and *Rugby League 2* (previewed on page 24) from kiwi developers Sidhe Interactive and Oz-based Tru-Blu Entertainment was also on show, but there were a few others too. Looking like a blend of *Mercenaries*-style action in a *Mad Max* inspired post-apocalyptic desert, *Scavenger* features miles and miles of open desert and shanty towns (fully destructible, mind you) and is a mix of vehicle combat, on-foot action, convoy raids and plenty more. Just like *Mercenaries*, anything with wheels or rotors can be driven, flown, or customised with cow skulls. Ratbag is still looking for a publisher, but we doubt it'll have to wait long. *Scavenger* is expected later next year.

Heroes of the Pacific from IR Gurus is an arcade World War II dogfighter. Admittedly, it's a little niche – but it's definitely a slick looking game. The detail in the sky and clouds is staggering, explosions and smoke trails abound, and planes glint convincingly in the sun. Speaking of planes, IR Gurus has said it can put up to 300 of them in the sky at once. If the fire and forget nature of *Ace Combat* has you yearning for the days when aerial combat required a bit of testicular tenacity, keep your eyes out for these magnificent men in their flying machines come September. **LR**



INVASION! CLOSE ENCOUNTERS

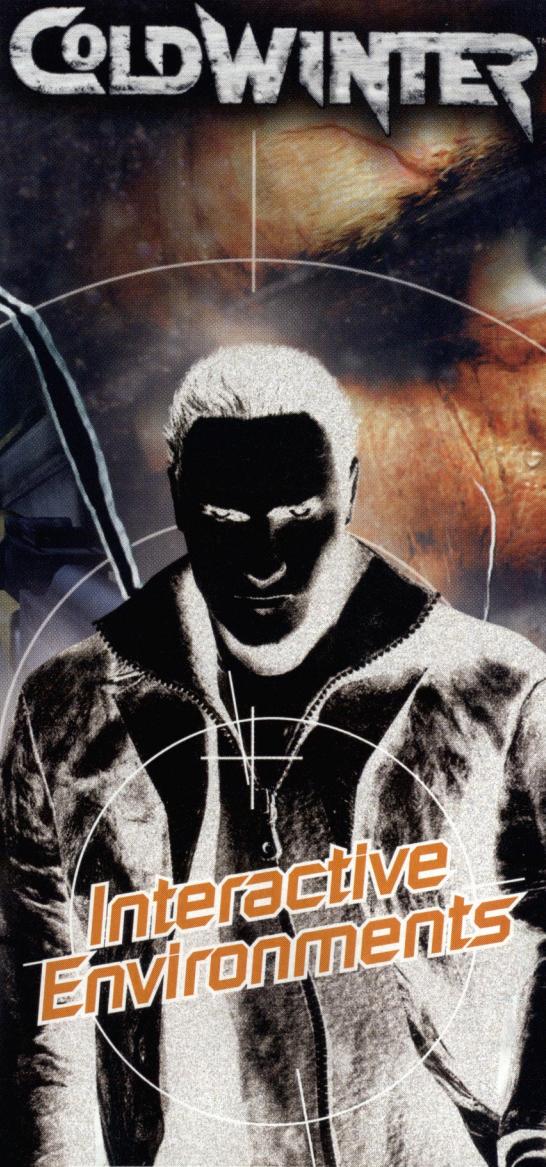
Hunt down the illegal alien!

Thanks to THQ we have 10 units of my hilarious new sci-fi spoof *Destroy All Humans!* from the good-humoured earthlings at Pandemic. Want to win them? The unevolved crew on this magazine have hidden a computer-generated duplicate of me somewhere in this puny Earth-book. Track me down if you have the capacity! Do not expect to find me in the *Destroy All Humans!* review either, you pitiful homo-sapiens. I know you share the same ancestor as apes, but can you wrap your feeble brain stems around that? Good. Hop to it pathetic humans! **ET**



HOW TO ENTER – Send entries to OPS2@derwenthoward.com.au with "Destroy All Humans! Giveaway" in the subject line, enter on our website www.derwenthoward.com.au or post your entries via snail mail to OPS2 Magazine, PO Box 1037, Bondi Junction, NSW 1355. Email entrants are entitled to one email per competition only. Entries should be clearly marked and include the name of the competition, your name, age, email address, phone number (mobile also) and address. All competitions close 27 July 2005. This competition is also open to NZ residents.

Swinging Ape Studios by Blizzard, bringing Starcraft: Ghost back in house, should be a good start.



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PlayStation 2

the top ten

E3 PARTIES

1. Gary Coleman's

Gary Coleman's was the most exclusive party in town. This wasn't because it was invitation only – it was because Coleman had a 'You Need To Be This High To Enter' sign on the door. Anyone over four feet tall was denied entry.

2. Ozzy Osbourne's

The only problem with Ozzy's party was we couldn't understand a damn word anyone was saying. We did eventually teach him some of our own favourite expletives though, like man-gina.

3. Jenna Jameson's

There was a no dress code policy at Jenna's party – meaning no clothes were to be worn at any time. We dropped in for a while, but Jenna already had places to hang her towels.

4. The Rock's

Easily the toughest party in town – once we entered, a bell rang and we were thrown into a massive Battle Royal. The rules were that anyone thrown out of the house was eliminated from the party. Naz copped a people's elbow and was tossed through a window, a midget shoved Luke out the back door and Paul was punted off the balcony by an NFL player.

5. Paris Hilton's

We arrived to find the party was a black tie affair with fairy classical music. It took us over an hour to discover that Paris' party was next door. The giveaway was when we heard someone yell, "that's the spot!" – obviously meaning that's the spot where the party was.

6. Team America's

This party was going great until Naz accidentally stepped on one of the puppets. He got a splinter stuck in his foot and wanted to leave. The party was getting kind of wooden anyway.

7. Jean-Claude Van Damme's

We found 'The Muscles from Brussels' place but found him crying, clutching a copy of *Kickboxer*. There was nobody else there so we left.

8. Snoop Dogg's

We couldn't see a thing at Snoop's party. Apparently there was a problem with the smoke machine and it had filled the room. We stayed for a while but we got really hungry – so we left to find a kebab stand.

9. Quentin Tarantino's

Quentin's party had blood fountains, blood all over the walls and the only drinks they were serving were Bloody Marys – with real blood. Paul disappeared with Uma Thurman for 15 minutes while Tristan discussed Quarter Pounders with John Travolta. Samuel L. Jackson got drunk and was asking who wanted to hold his lightsabre.

10. 50 Cent's

We thought it would be funny to wear bulletproof vests to 50's party but when we arrived we saw that everyone was wearing one. Now we know how women feel when someone else shows up in the same dress.

SCREENSHOT OF THE MONTH

Prince of Persia: Kindred Blades: Armed and dangerous!



LOCK 'N' LOAD

HAMMERTIME!

Back to the frontline

Although we've only had *Full Spectrum Warrior* for a short time Pandemic is well into a sequel for the already innovative original. *Full Spectrum Warrior: Ten Hammers* is deeper and offers a swag of new moves, new strategies, new support and new teams to use.

This time around you'll have the opportunity to control up to four teams, split teams in half, send out scouts and control armoured units like Bradley Fighting Vehicles and armoured Humvees. Scouts make recon far easier, and the Bradley's 25mm chain gun, 762mm machine gun and anti-tank missiles will turn any AK-47 wielding insurgent's smile upside-down.

With online modes for up to eight players, *Ten Hammers* will be a worthy addition to *SOCOM 3* for the strategically inclined. **LR**

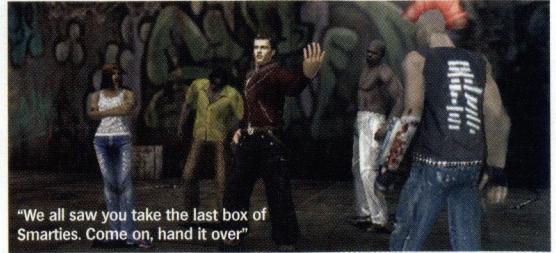


FISTED!

BEAT 'EM DOWN

You'd better recognise fool!

Revenge. It's bloody, it's brutal, it's a hell of a lot of fun and it's what you'll be out for in *Beat Down: Fists Of Vengeance*. Crime rules the streets of the fictional town of Los Sombras, where you play a gangster who is betrayed and out for retribution. With the mob after you, you'll need protection. You can recruit allies to fight along side you and customise your fighter's appearance to conceal your identity. Get recognised, fights break out. Get into too many, you walk around with a cut and bruised face, are known as a brawler and, you guessed it, more fights break out. Then you'll have the fuzz on your ass – and not the kind that had Tristan at the doctor's last week, we mean the boys in blue. With extreme customisation available in the form of plastic surgery, this vicious beat 'em up should give the genre a refreshing new twist. **DK**



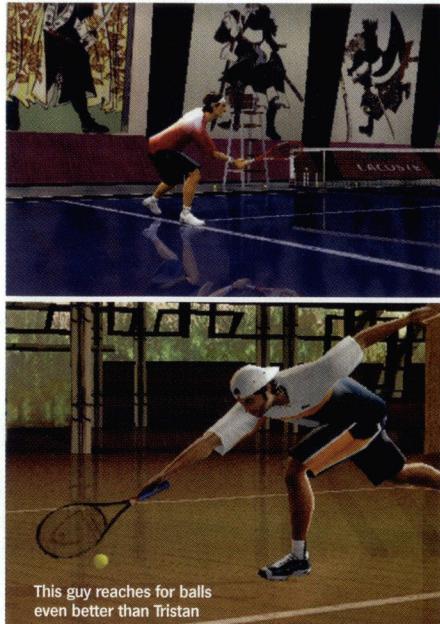
TENNIS ANYONE?

WHAT'S ALL THAT RACQUET?

Get your balls online

If you've been disappointed with the lack of tennis titles on the PS2 then you'll be happy to know *Top Spin* is finally coming. *Top Spin* will be the ultimate tennis experience. In the career mode you'll start off as a rookie ball boy who couldn't hit a fly, then work your way up to take on the professionals. They're all here too. Williams, Federer, Sharapova and all your other favourite stars will be holding court in *Top Spin* and you'll get a chance to take a swing at all of them.

Top Spin has taken its sweet ass time coming to the PS2 and to make up for it 2K Games is giving us some much-deserved exclusive features. The first is EyeToy support. This means you'll be able to take a photo of your face with an EyeToy and then use it to create a tennis star. Who knows, you might even pick up a hot chick like Bec Cartwright. The other exclusive feature is that *Top Spin* will be the only online tennis title on the PS2. It won't be your basic tennis match either. We're talking matchmaking, sponsor tournaments, seeding and player ladders. You won't find an online tennis experience like this on the PS2 or any other console – so it looks like *Top Spin* will be the balls. Oh, and by the way – if the engagement doesn't work out, we're not going anywhere, Bec. No pressure. **PF**



JUICY

BURN RUBBER!

Hit the track and win Juiced!

T HQ has managed to squeeze out 10 copies of their fresh new street-racer *Juiced* for us to give away. Featuring some slick visuals and a garage ranging from hot Japanese imports, classic US muscle and beefy Aussie grunt – *Juiced* has something for every racing fan. Want to score a free copy? Just tell us what you'd call your *Juiced* race crew and why in 20 words or less and you may be the owner of a gleaming new game. **LR**

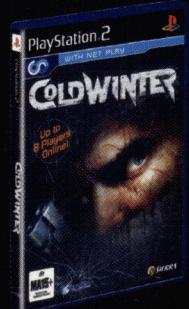


HOW TO ENTER – Send entries to OPS2@derwenthoward.com.au with "Juiced Giveaway" in the subject line, enter on our website www.derwenthoward.com.au or post your entries via snail mail to OPS2 Magazine, PO Box 1037, Bondi Junction, NSW 1355. Email entrants are entitled to one email per competition only. Entries should be clearly marked and include the name of the competition, your name, age, email address, phone number (mobile also) and address. All competitions close 27 July 2005. This competition is also open to NZ residents.

looking forward to whupping our candy asses in our lunch breaks again. Not literally, of course.

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**OUT
NOW**



PlayStation®2

PS2 TOP 10 GAMES CHART

1		STAR WARS EPISODE III: REVENGE OF THE SITH moves straight to number one. We just wish Mace Windu was a little more like Jules from <i>Pulp Fiction</i> , "Tatooine ain't no planet I ever heard of! They speak English on Tatooine?"
2		GRAN TURISMO 4 has a lock up and slides into second place on the grid. Still, it's in a good position to pounce once the Star Wars fever slackens a little. We doubt we've seen the last of this monster racing epic – it's not going anywhere.
3		LEGO STAR WARS sticks a red-hot lightsabre straight up CJ's rear and busts him and his GTA: San Andreas homes out of the top three for the first time ever. It looks like you believed us when we said LEGO Star Wars is an absolute hoot!

RANK	TITLE	CATEGORY	DISTRIBUTOR
4	Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas	Adventure	Take 2
5	Midnight Club 3: DUB Edition	Racing	Take 2
6	Predator: Concrete Jungle	Action	Vivendi
7	SingStar Party Bundle	Party	Sony
8	Star Wars: Battlefront	Action	EA
9	Need for Speed: Underground 2	Racing	EA
10	Ratchet & Clank 3	Adventure	Sony

PS2 RELEASE SCHEDULE

JULY

AFL Premiership 2005	Sports	Sony
Brave	Action	Sony
Cricket 2005	Sports	EA
Delta Force: Black Hawk Down	Action	Vivendi
Fahrenheit	Action	Atari
Fantastic Four	Action	Activision
Killer 7	Action	THQ
Madagascar	Platformer	Activision
Tekken 5	Beat 'em up	Sony

AUGUST

Dead to Rights II	Action	EA
NHL 2006	Sports	EA

Q3/Q4 2005

187 Ride or Die	Racing	Ubisoft
25 to Life	Action	Atari
Bloodrayne 2	Action	Vivendi
Burnout: Revenge	Racing	EA
Buzz! The Music Quiz	Party	Sony
Charlie and The Chocolate Factory	Adventure	Take Two
Conflict: Global Terror	Action	Atari
FIFA 2006	Sports	EA
Getting Up	Action	Atari
Harry Potter: Goblet of Fire	Action	EA
Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction	Sports	Take 2
James Bond 007: From Russia With Love	Action	EA
Marvel Nemesis: Rise of the Imperfects	Action	EA
Metal Slug 4 & 5	Action	QV
NBA Live 2006	Sports	EA
NFS Most Wanted	Racing	EA
Painkiller	FPS	QV
Prince of Persia: Kindred Blades	Adventure	Ubisoft
Rainbow Six 4: Lockdown	FPS	Ubisoft
Ricky Ponting International Cricket	Sports	Atari
Rugby League 2	Sports	Tru-Blu
Shrek: SuperSlam	Wrestling	Activision
Soul Calibur III	Beat 'em up	Sony
The Godfather	Action	EA
The Sims 2	Strategy	EA
The Warriors	Action	Take 2
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2006	Sports	EA
Top Spin	Sports	Take 2
V8 Supercars 2005	Racing	Atari
X-Men Legends 2	Action	Activision



Loading

MORE METAL!

SUBSISTENCE

Snake's not quite done eating yet...

Metal Gear founder Hideo Kojima has announced his latest project, *Metal Gear Solid 3: Subsistence*. Not unlike the similar *Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance*, Kojima believes *Subsistence* will be the "complete *Snake Eater*".

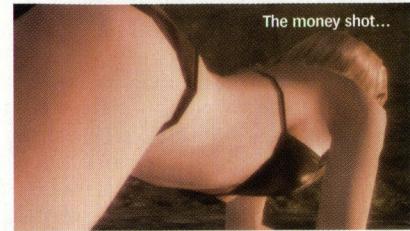
For the first time in the series it will feature a fully free roaming, third-person camera system. The moveable camera will allow players a far better view than they're used to. Kojima's team is aiming for up to eight player online play also.

A theatre of movie parodies that have been spreading from Konami's Japanese website will also feature as well as a demo theatre including every cut-scene in the game.

Kojima is also stuffing in a Boss Duel Mode, more *Snake vs. Monkey* missions, a Peeping

Tom Mode for sexually frustrated *Metal Gear* aficionados as well as the MSX versions of both *Metal Gear* and *Metal Gear 2* for those who want to go a little retro.

Kojima also announced both a sequel to *Metal Gear Acid* on PSP and *Metal Gear Solid 4* for PS3. The card playing capers in *Acid* don't exactly float our boat, but some next generation *Snake* certainly does... 



The money shot...

BUDOKAI!!

BALLS UP!

You know what we're Saiyan, man?

Dragonball, in its many incarnations, has been around for a number of years spawning many epic sagas, games and numerous letters added to its title (Z, GT). *Budokai Tenkaichi* has taken on the challenge of incorporating all major plot twists and turns from the three series and allowing you to play them out, as you see fit, in the comfort of your own home. Featuring fully destructible environments and underwater battles, you'll also be able to take to the skies for mid-air combat. If you've seen it in the TV show, chances are you'll be able to relive it in the game. 



EAT ME

DINNER TIME!

Win autographed Metal Gear, er... gear

The guys at Atari have cooked up quite a feast for you guys – a copy of *Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater Collector's Edition* signed by the man himself Hideo Kojima, a T-Shirt and a pen, so you can give out your own autographs for being awesome. We've got three of these packs to give away, and all you have to do is come up with your best recipe for a snake. Start cooking! 



HOW TO ENTER – Send entries to OPS2@derwenthoward.com.au with "Metal Gear Giveaway" in the subject line, enter on our website www.derwenthoward.com.au or post your entries via snail mail to OPS2 Magazine, PO Box 1037, Bondi Junction, NSW 1355. Email entrants are entitled to one email per competition only. Entries should be clearly marked and include the name of the competition, your name, age, email address, phone number (mobile also) and address. All competitions close 27 July 2005. This competition is also open to NZ residents.

CHART-TOPPER**AND THE BEAT GOES ON****Grab your buzzer**

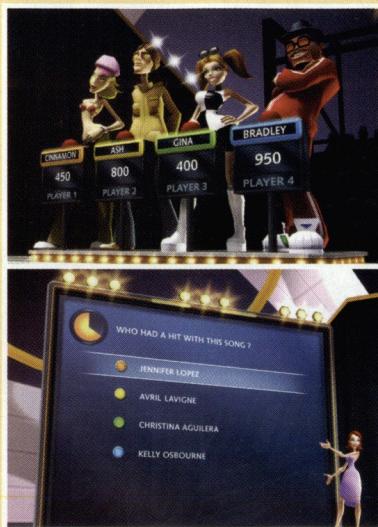
Sometimes a game is so simple in theory it's a wonder nobody has ever thought of it before. That's exactly how we felt when *Buzz! The Music Quiz* was exposed at E3. A perfect companion for Sony's other music-related series *SingStar*, *Buzz!* will be perfect for music lovers who dig good tunes but have a singing voice reminiscent of a particularly disgruntled walrus who smokes a pack a day.

Buzz! is a music trivia game with over 5000 questions and over 1000 music clips featuring hits and pieces from around the world, from the 1950s all the way to 2005.

Buzz! will ship with four bespoke buzzers and the ridiculously simple interface of pushing the buzzer and selecting the right answer will allow even the most technically stunted mates and relatives to join in the action.

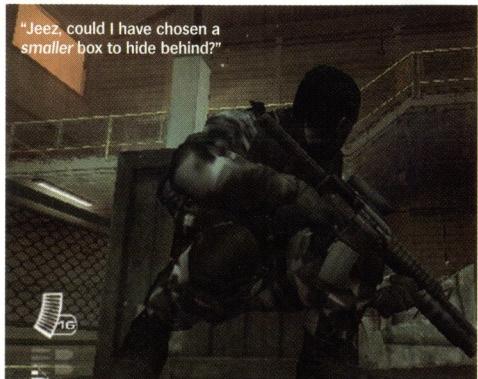
Featuring eight different rounds with different rules for each, *Buzz!* should rule many a party for months – or at least until the questions run out.

Assuming the music doesn't all blow, we're not lying when we say we're looking forward to giving our buzzers a workout come October. **LR**

**WARNING BELLS****YOU'VE BEEN WARNED**

Well, we didn't see this one coming...

The TV series 24 brought a feeling of tension and urgency with its multiple plotlines and real-time action. Circle Studios is hoping to build on this with *Without Warning*. Here, you'll take on the personas of six different people caught in a chemical plant swarming with terrorists over a twelve-hour period. Three are military personnel trying to axe the terrorists, and three are civilians caught in the wrong place at the wrong time. Each has their own motives, objectives and separate storyline. Gameplay overlaps, so you might witness a skirmish you've just completed as a soldier from a different perspective as you continue as another character. Very cool! **DK**

**URBAN SPRawl****HERE COMES THE REIGN**

"What'd you say 'bout my mama?"

Unless you've been living under a rock for the last ten years, you would be well familiar with two little titles that go by the names of *Tekken* and *Soul Calibur*. Grab a couple of guys who worked on each, throw in a turf war, add a rough street setting and you've got *Urban Reign*, the latest kick-ass style brawler from Namco. With interactive/destructible environments, large-scale arenas, individual fighting styles, over thirty weapons and sixty, that's right, sixty playable characters to choose from, you'd be forgiven for thinking *Urban Reign* is not prepared to live in the shadows of its predecessors. You know what they say, size matters (sorry James – she's lying to you). We're hoping it's quality and not quantity on offer in, what's looking like, a possible sleeper hit out later this year. **DK**



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Feedback

We spend the whole magazine talking to you - now it's your turn!

SPEAK TO US!

Come on, we know you guys are bursting to get involved. Share your thoughts with the nation's PlayStation 2 owners in the new, improved Feedback section and you could win an exclusive Atari T-shirt and this issue's Game of the Month! Write to us on paper or by email:

OPS2 Feedback
Derwent Howard
PO Box 1037
Bondi Junction, NSW 1355
Email: ops2@derwenthoward.com.au

WIN! GOD OF WAR



OPS2 chart

Some games mags are written by people who don't play games very often, but not OPS2 - in fact, we play games so much here that we almost never manage to get a tan in summer! Here's what's been making us pasty this month.



1. DESTROY ALL HUMANS!

With the ability to probe people and use mind powers to toss cars around like Frisbees, this game was always going to be brilliant. Beam us up, Crypto!



2. BURNOUT 3: TAKEDOWN

Will we ever stop playing this game? Not until Burnout: Revenge is released, that's for damn sure. This game is crack on a disc!



3. GOD OF WAR

God of awesome action, more like it. This game is insanely addictive. That sneaky bastard Luke somehow managed to get a 748 hit combo. Beat that!

LOVES THE RASH

I just wanted to ask if you guys had heard anything about a new *Road Rash* game coming out in the near future because *Road Rash: Jailbreak* is just about the most fun game ever released on PSone. There are few things more fun than getting a few mates over and beating the hell out of each other on motos. Don't you agree? I even occasionally pull out the old PSone just to give that a bit of a whirl. Even though it looks like six miles of dog crap, it's worth it! It's just so much fun and isn't that what games are all about? Having a few mates over, cracking open a few cold ones and giving the PlayStation a good workout. Do you know if they cancelled the franchise or just never planned on releasing a PS2 version? It's hard to believe they would do either. Especially now considering the success of *Burnout 3*, which I feel is the only game that has come close to being as fun to play as *Road Rash: Jailbreak*. I can just imagine a new *Road Rash* game with the B3 engine slapped in it and it's almost orgasmic! Well, I hope you guys can inform me about the prospect of a new *Road Rash* - or, if not, at least agree that it would be amazing to see *Road Rash* with the B3 engine!

Brad Freeman, NSW

We hear you buddy. Along with Soul Calibur and Mashed, *Burnout 3* is always dusted off whenever we have a multiplayer bash. Disappointingly we haven't heard anything about a new *Road Rash* game being in the works. But with motorcycles being absent in the upcoming *Burnout: Revenge*, the time has never been more ripe for a new *Road Rash* game. Readers with ideas for games might be as common as the girls Nick picks up, but we think you're onto a winner here - unlike Nick.

SHOOTING BLANKS

I write to you today in a bid to get my thoughts across to every PS2 reader, or at least look cool by appearing in the Feedback section. Oh, and good mag by the way. Okay, the one thing that really bothers me about PS2s (beside the controller feeling like I'm holding a Weetbix) is its first-person shooters. It's not that the games are bad quality. It's just the fact that I can't seem to hit the bad guys, let alone kill them, and it's not because I'm blind or only have one hand. It's because none of the games have an option to adjust the sensitivity of the joysticks. Whenever I play an FPS, I find that the controller acts like a kid on too much red cordial. The control is too sensitive and I keep over-moving the crosshairs and missing the target. Either that or the game is the opposite and it takes me five minutes just to move my crosshairs. It was only a couple of days ago when I was hanging out in some 3D graphics... doing... things... when someone brought up the topic of videogames. "Perfect Dark was such a great shooter" one of them said. I remembered back to playing this game on my Nintendo 64, and I also remember that Narayan Pattison was the editor of N64 Gamer magazine at the time (yes, he does have a dark side). *Perfect Dark* controlled like a dream.

My point is, that I have never played a PS2 FPS that was as fun to play and easy to

control as *Perfect Dark*. But playing your latest demo disc, I had a great time playing *Metal Gear Solid 3*. Would you believe it was just as easy to shoot and control in its first-person mode (even though it's not an FPS game). I think it's controlled better than FPS games like *Area 51*. It made me so excited that I started to save up for *MGS3*! Okay, I was already saving up for it but I put an extra 25c in for my excitement. So game developers all over the world, please develop games that are easy to use, or at least have it so you can modify the sensitivity.

Zachary, Tasmania

While we're glad to hear you loved the shooting in *MGS3*, we can't help but think that you're basing your comments on a very small number of first-person shooters. If you're a fan of *Perfect Dark* then it's criminal if you haven't played any of the *TimeSplitters* games. They were created by members of the *Perfect Dark* team and have controls that are as tight as an Eskimo's nutsack. At least half of the FPS games on PS2 also have sensitivity controls so you can adjust the aiming speed how you like. As well as the *TimeSplitters* games, the recently released *Project: Snowblind* is another superb FPS you should check out.

GUINNESS BOOK OF RECORDS ENTRY?

I just finished reading the May issue of your



mag and I was wondering how old the youngest reader is? I started reading your mag when I was eight. I can't wait till the next mag arrives at my house next month and until you guys do the full report on *Destroy All Humans*. I am 10-and-a-half now.

Mick, Queensland

Eight? You have to get out of bed a bit earlier than that if you want to be OPS2's youngest reader. Paul's been using an ultrasound speaker to read the mag to his sister's baby. Paul sure is taking this whole 'father' thing pretty seriously.

NUMBER ONE FAN

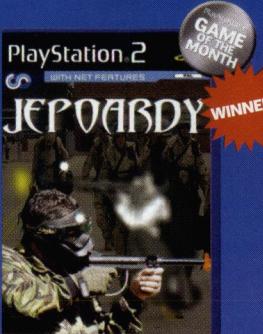
Hey dudes! The mag is awesome (as always). Probably my favourite aspect of the mag is the attitude. Y'know, like, the way you guys write - it's so laid back and casual. Like if someone's in your face (so to speak) you just tell 'em where to stick it! And the reviews, if you don't like a game, you'll completely destroy it (with words). Also I love the extras that you have, like the DVD reviews and Technophile. The Re-Play challenges are hard to do, but by persevering you're able to do them. So, basically this is just a happy consumer congratulating you guys on the fine job you are doing, and that I hope you will continue to do!

Shannan Maggs, via email

Thanks mate. We'll be able to send that cash

IT SHOULD BE A GAME

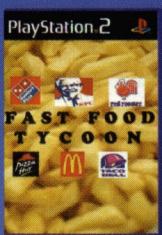
If you've got a great idea for a game, email it to ops2@derwenthoward.com.au or post it to the usual address. Don't forget to create a cool looking cover. The best one each month scores a free copy of the game of the month!



JEOPARDY

A group of Australian soldiers are dropped off on a small island off the east coast for a training exercise. But things go wrong. It turns out the island is overrun by a small army of terrorists who landed there. So you have to complete different missions to stop the terrorists from building their army up to attack Australia.

Lance Head, Western Australia



FAST FOOD TYCOON

What would you do if you owned a fast food chain? How would you deal with the guy at the front of the line who wants 12 Big Macs and 20 large fries? Would you make all those burgers and fries or just tell him to leave? In this game you will make some drastic decisions, but first you need to work your way up to the big fish. Start at the counter or at the grill making burgers or cleaning the floors after closing. This is THE #1 restaurant simulator.

Max Megele, Victoria



DAMNATION IN A DAY

It's a Final Fantasy-style RPG. A holyman is walking down a road when Satan appears offering all this good stuff in exchange for faithful service in hell. The holyman refuses so Satan says, "It's better to rule hell for a day than to rule in heaven for eternity" and holds up this really, really nice sword that catches the holyman's eyes. Satan hands over hell to this holyman for one day. You then find the error of your ways and decide to stop the war and un-damn Earth by killing Satan.

The Disturbed1, via email

we promised just as soon as Sarah Michelle Gellar agrees to hire us as her gigolos. What's she waiting for?

TRUE BLUE

Why doesn't anyone make any war games about the ANZACs? Most of my mates and I love playing the Medal of Honor & MGS games, but I would love to play as an ANZAC landing at Gallipoli or charging in after the light brigade and it being as good as the MOH & MGS games. How many awesome battles are there in movies like Gallipoli? Imagine sitting down to play the game and at the main menu or the opening FMV having "Only 19" by Redgum playing in the background. Then the boats land and as you're running off the boats the Turks start firing on you. I don't think I'm alone in wanting an Aussie war game.

Lachlan, via email

Money, money, money... It's not just a catchy song and something Luke uses to buy lap dances with. It's also the reason why we rarely see videogames that appeal only to Aussies. If you make a game that appeals to Americans you've got hundreds of millions of potential customers, compared to our 20 million customers. Because of its limited appeal outside of Australia and New

Zealand, an ANZAC shooter is unlikely, but it is possible. Developers like Sidhe Interactive (Rugby League 2) and IR Gurus (AFL 2006) have shown that making Aussie games can be profitable, so there's a good chance we'll see more in the future.



Here at OPS2 Towers, we've been hard at work putting some OPS2 information online, and our forums are now alive and very kicking. We've decided to run the best quotes from our forums here in Feedback, so you can get your point across and have it printed for posterity! Next time you're online be sure to get yourself across to www.derwenthoward.com.au and drop in and say "hi". Keep your thoughts about other consoles to yourself though, or we'll have to smack you with copies of our magazine!

On... May 2005 Discussion Thread

Did you see the Burnout 3 record!!! 191!!! JESUS!!!

I take my hat off to him.
Woody

I'm that guy who got the 191 on Burnout 3. The secret is Powderfinger on my mp3 player (not the garbage rock they have), and knowing the track and the car layout to the inch. Did you know that the car routines are the same until you get to 70 takedowns? Or that after 30 minutes you get "time up"? I was "Damage Critical" after about 65 takedowns. It is the only time I have ever gone for 30 mins, I didn't actually crash. Who'd of thought that being anti-social would lead to something. My top scores are all over 140, and I can get about 28 takedowns on 1 lap (best). Choice of car is Custom Coupe Ultimate and Silverlake Southbound. Another great timewaster in my life is SSX Tricky. I wouldn't allow myself to go to bed until I had beaten my highest score (on Garibaldi). solidmatt

On... Best storyline in a game

I really liked the Tony Hawk's Underground storyline with the punk skater Eric as your enemy.
Simon

How the hell can you consider Tony Hawk Underground to have a great storyline? If that's the case, my vote goes to the storylines of Mario Party - both riveting and thought provoking.
Suteki

GTA: SA had pretty cool storyline. Very movie-like. Even though the story was good, I'll have to admit, what CJ did in the game was totally unrealistic; going from spray-painting and bumpin' off dealers, to stealing jets and performing elite agency stuff, like blowing up a dam and infiltrating a boat. LOL.
Renegade

CJ is a bitch, plain and simple. If anyone even thinks for a second that CJ could beat Tommy Vercetti, then it's time to check in to reality suites and have a brain enema. A LONG one.
Fezzy_O'Hare

INSIDE GAMING

Naz sits down with the God of War, Kratos

Naz: Can you tell us a little about what the God of War project was like?

Kratos: I fought Gods the size of mountains and slaughtered thousands of demons. What do you think it was like?

Naz: Alright, buddy. No need to get tetchy. It didn't look like it was all hard work. Medusa aside, all of the girls in the game were totally hot and totally naked.

Kratos: They were not naked. They were wearing traditional Greek clothing.

Naz: Traditional clothing eh? Right... gotcha. Anyway, it's great to see all those "Put more naked chicks in games" letters we've been sending to Sony have finally paid off.

Kratos: Get to the point, human.

Naz: Okay, so how was Pandora in the sack?

Kratos: What is this sack you speak of? Pandora had possession of my magical sword and I had to pull it out of her box. My magic sword is so powerful it can slay Gods!

Naz: Hahahaha. So... you'd need to keep that 'magical sword' pretty sharp. Does Pandora polish your sword or do you polish it yourself?

Kratos: I polish my sword every morning.

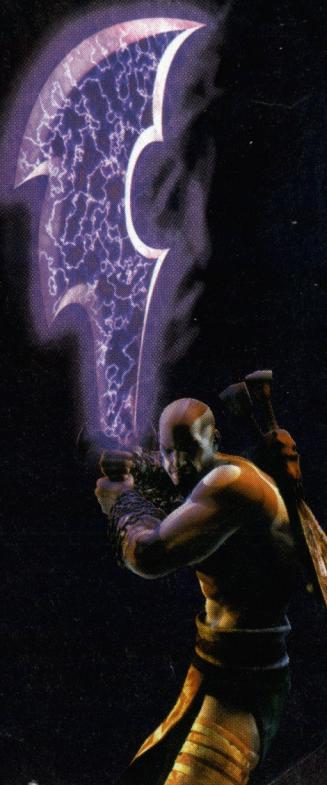
Naz: You must be really flexible then... hahahaha

Kratos: Stop laughing you feeble human!

Naz: Or what? You'll whip out your 'magic sword'? Go ahead, I dare you. I could use another laugh. Hey, who do you think would win in a sword fight between you and Ron Jeremy?

Kratos: Is he a God?

Naz: He's a bit of a legend but I wouldn't go as far as calling him a God. You might though, considering how much you like polishing swords... Anyway, I'd love to stay and chat, but you're not exactly the God of Conversation, so I'm out of here. Tell Pandora I said, "Hi".



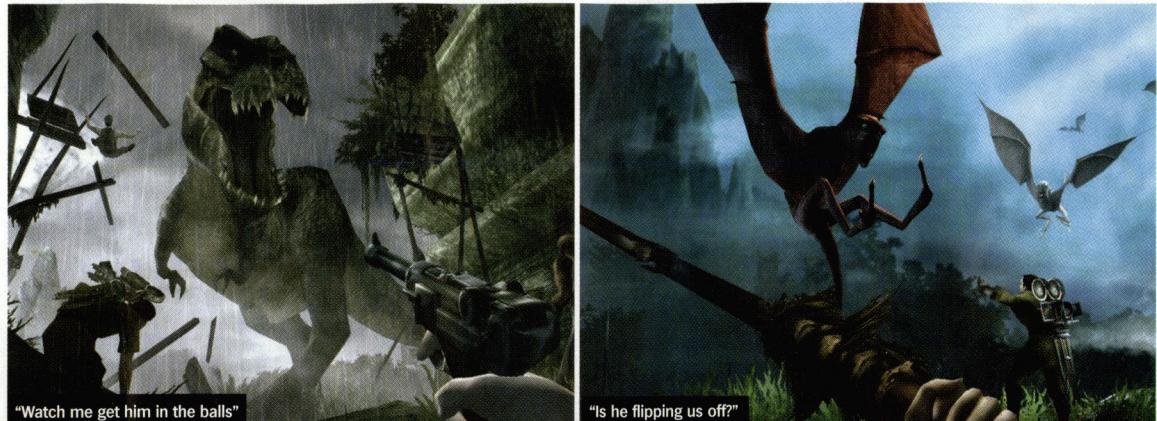
Pre-play

FIRST LOOK

PLAYERS: 1
DISTRIBUTOR: UBISOFT
DEVELOPER: UBISOFT
WEBSITE: WWW.UBISOFT.COM
LAST SEEN: FIRST LOOK
RELEASE DATE: DECEMBER

50%

KING KONG looks amazing, but beneath the gorgeous visuals lies enough chest-beating aggression to fuel a truly intense action experience. Regardless of the film's success, it's looking strong enough to stand on its own two lumbering legs.



X ACTION

KING KONG

Will this Kong be a King or a Donkey?

Ordinarily it's only on our birthday that we end up roaming the streets completely naked, trampling everything in our path and terrifying children and adults alike – but now we'll be able to leave the Tequila on the shelf and do it every day of the year thanks to Ubisoft's *King Kong*, which lets you take control of the giant ape himself. Don't assume playing *Super Monkey Ball Deluxe* will be adequate preparation either – Kong's a super monkey all right, but what he does in his downtime is none of your business.

Set for release on the hairy, football field-sized back of Peter Jackson's blockbuster movie, *King Kong* will feature third-person based gameplay (when you're Kong) interspersed with first-person shooter-style levels (when you take control of puny human Jack Driscoll). So far the game looks absolutely stunning; with the lush jungle-based environments of Skull Island, not to mention its

prehistoric carnivore inhabitants, appearing beautifully lit and rich with detail.

Kong himself looks amazing too, although you'll just have to take our word for that – the big ape is noticeably absent from any of the screenshots. He's a powerful sucker too – at one point we watched Kong deliver a crunching roundhouse punch to a T-Rex before following it up with a backhand slap that would make any female wrestler proud. Just when we thought it was over, Kong grabbed the dino by the snout, ripped its jaws apart and dropped it on the ground. Now that's hardcore.

The game is being developed by the team behind the underrated *Beyond Good & Evil* and in close collaboration with Peter Jackson's Wingnut Films, and from what we've seen so far the relationship is paying dividends.

In the Jack Driscoll levels, there's a real focus on tension and desperation. You won't always have an arsenal

DAMN DIRTY APE

This original version of *King Kong* was actually released four times between 1933 and 1952, and each release saw the cutting of scenes. Even though many of the removed scenes were restored in 1971 (including the scene where the randy monkey strips off Fay Wray's clothes) one scene has never been found. It is the clip where Kong shakes four sailors off a log bridge, and they fall into a ravine and are devoured alive by giant spiders. When the movie, complete with spider sequence intact, was previewed in late January 1933, members of the audience screamed and either left the theatre or talked about the grisly sequence throughout the remainder of the film. Pussies...



of weapons and instead you'll need to make the most of anything you can get your hands on, such as primitive wooden spears, to take care of those pesky velociraptors nipping at your heels.

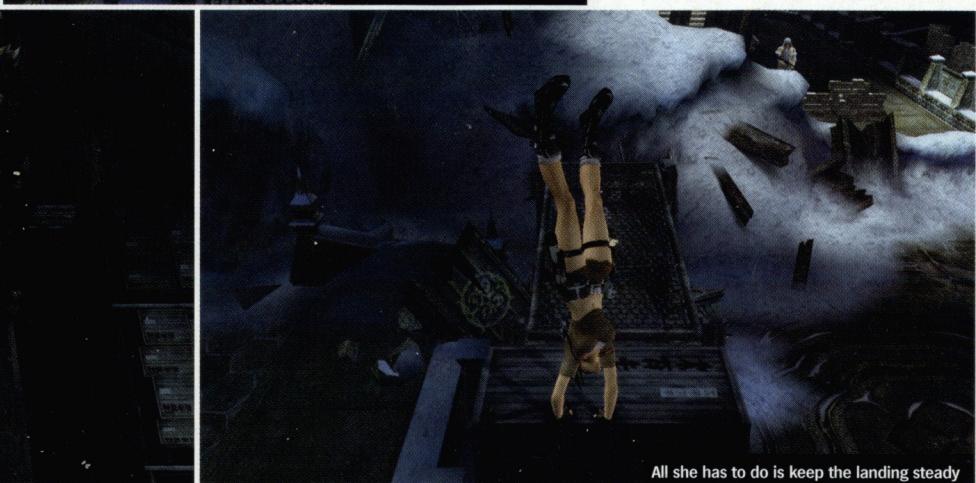
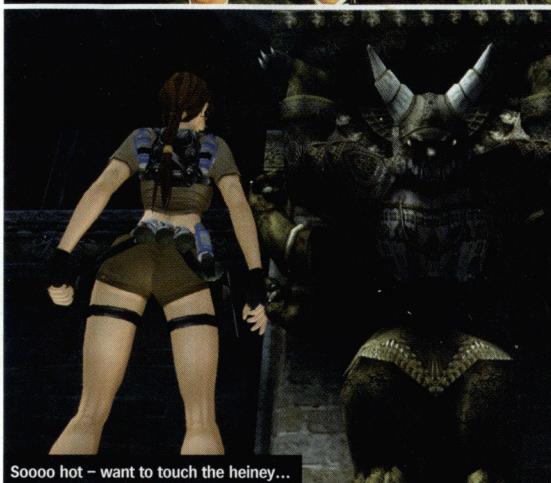
Playing as Kong contrasts nicely with the Driscoll missions in the sense that you feel all-powerful, stomping over vine covered walls and letting out booming roars that send a shuddering blur effect across the screen. But why is he so damn angry? Hey Kong! Relax – chicks love gigantic hairy dudes, we swear. **Tristan Oglivie**



FIRST LOOK	
PLAYERS: 1	
DISTRIBUTOR: EIDOS	
DEVELOPER: CRYSTAL DYNAMICS	
WEBSITE: WWW.EIDOS.COM	
LAST SEEN: OPS2 #41	
RELEASE DATE: LATE 2005	

65%

TOMB RAIDER: LEGEND is already looking ridiculous better than its underwhelming predecessor. Looks like it'll be the closest yet to recapturing those tingly feelings you had when you first booted up the original *Tomb Raider* almost a decade ago.



All she has to do is keep the landing steady

X ACTION-ADVENTURE

TOMB RAIDER: LEGEND

34D - 24 - 35

They say Helen of Troy had a face that launched a thousand ships, but Lara Croft had a rack that launched a million PlayStations. Unfortunately, it was a long fall from the top for the unfortunate heroine – each follow-up seemed to drift further and further away from the elements that made the original such a quality package. Ms Croft's first appearance on the PS2 was supposed to be a triumphant return for the iconic PlayStation über-woman, but it was not to be. *Tomb Raider: Angel of Darkness* was a bitter disappointment. The same old stodgy controls and some fashionable but under-explored stealth elements had many a former raider ditching the Angel of Dullness for something more exciting.

But times change. And so do developers.

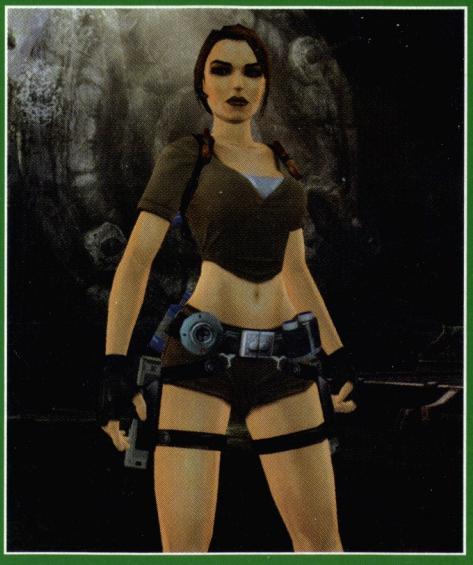
In case you missed our feature on the new direction of the *Tomb Raider* series in last month's issue, here's the abridged version. When it became obvious the series had stagnated, development duties were moved from Core to Crystal Dynamics – the studio behind *Project: Snowblind* and the *Legacy of Kain* series. With a new team 10 times the size of the original and the return of Lara's creator Toby Gard as her visual, movement and character designer, things seemed to be looking up. Well, after seeing it again in action at E3, we can confirm they definitely are.

At this point, Lara's new adventure is instantly more impressive than anything she's done since her debut in 1996. The dated Lara model, the clunky mechanics, the uninspiring locations – Crystal Dynamics has ditched it all. The new Lara has a decidedly more natural anatomy, and although she's packing slightly smaller jubbies (you could still suffocate between 'em) the extra details Crystal Dynamics has squeezed in are immediately noticeable. Her animations are silky smooth and she's got moves that rival the noble Prince of Persia. She's clearly been practising since her last appearance, and every move we saw was executed with the trademark feminine grace you'd expect from lethal little Lara. The new animation system puts focus on continuous motion, giving Lara the ability to seamlessly handle any obstacle and interact dynamically with any surface. Even little touches like her ability to grab ledges automatically if you fall off help take Lara out of the gaming dark ages. She may be delicate, but you wouldn't sneak out the morning after without making her breakfast – you'd be a dead man if you didn't.

It looks like the Queen of adventure is returning to her roots, and we're certainly looking forward to 'experimenting' with her later this year. **Luke Reilly**

GLOBETROTTER

We saw some pretty blistering action at E3 and some of Lara's signature moves are sure to raise a few eyebrows. Watching Lara somersault with a pair of blazing Desert Eagles is as kinky as it is impressive, but it seems the action has been used slightly more sparingly this time so it doesn't ruin the exploration. Lara will be raiding West Africa, Peru, The Himalayas, Russia, Bolivia and three other locations that weren't disclosed. The great mix of locales makes for plenty of scenery variety, which you'd notice is particularly breathtaking if you weren't staring at Lara's arse.



HANDS ON

PLAYERS: TBC
DISTRIBUTOR: EA
DEVELOPER: CRITERION
WEBSITE: WWW.CRITERIONGAMES.COM
LAST SEEN: FIRST LOOK
RELEASE DATE: Q1 2006

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

60%

BLACK is a no-holds-barred, balls-to-the-wall shooter if we ever saw one – and we've seen 'em all. Criterion's devilish plan is to have *Black* do the same thing for first-person shooters as the *Burnout* series did for racing games.



Great balls of fire!



"Stop! Don't hit the car, I just had it washed"



X FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER

BLACK*Always bet on black*

Don't turn the page. Trust us, *Black* isn't another run of mill, first-person shooter – clumsily stomping over ground so well-trodden that you can't tell one shell casing from another. What if we told you it was being made by the very crew who delivered the heavenly *Burnout 3* into our lounge rooms? Would that get your attention? We thought so.

It doesn't take a nuclear physicist to point out that developing a killer arcade racer and developing a killer first-person shooter aren't exactly the same thing. However, after seeing it in action we're far from worried. Criterion firmly believes it can do for the first-person shooter what the *Burnout* series did for racing games. That means *Black* will be action packed, well stacked and something that rhymes with those two lines that means damn fun.

Console shooters have learnt a lot from PC shooters in recent years, and many have been moving to higher and higher levels of realism. The problem, of course, is that doesn't necessarily guarantee it'll be fun. Take *Gran Turismo 4* for instance – great game, sexier than Natalie Portman standing beside what used to be her underwear, but it can't match the unadulterated fun of *Burnout 3*.

The same applies for *Black*. Criterion has looked at the formula and taken out anything that drags it down. The world of *Black* is pure Hollywood fantasy. We should

stipulate that it's a guy's Hollywood fantasy – if you're looking for romance then you're on the wrong side of town, and most probably love kittens, walks on the beach and West Coast Coolers. (That, or you're an actual woman. In which case, what are you doing later? You like kittens?)

In *Black*'s highly-stylised world, guns are loud and scary, they never run out of bullets and they do a hell of a lot of damage to the soft, fleshy bodies of your enemies and your immediate surroundings. The arsenal is impressive to say the least, and although you may think rocket launchers are a little passé these days – a rocket launcher from the company that pioneered the 'takedown' is a totally different story.

By focusing on the basics Criterion is aiming to deliver some of the most intense and sustained action this side of cinema. One frantic firefight we saw had the protagonist pitched against a handful of enemies, who both proceeded to unload a few hundred rounds at each other – to spectacular effect. The air was filled with smoke and dust, and debris was exploding in every direction. Criterion doesn't want *Black* to be a simulation, it wants you to be able wage a one-man war and crawl out of a mountain of crap with a grin.

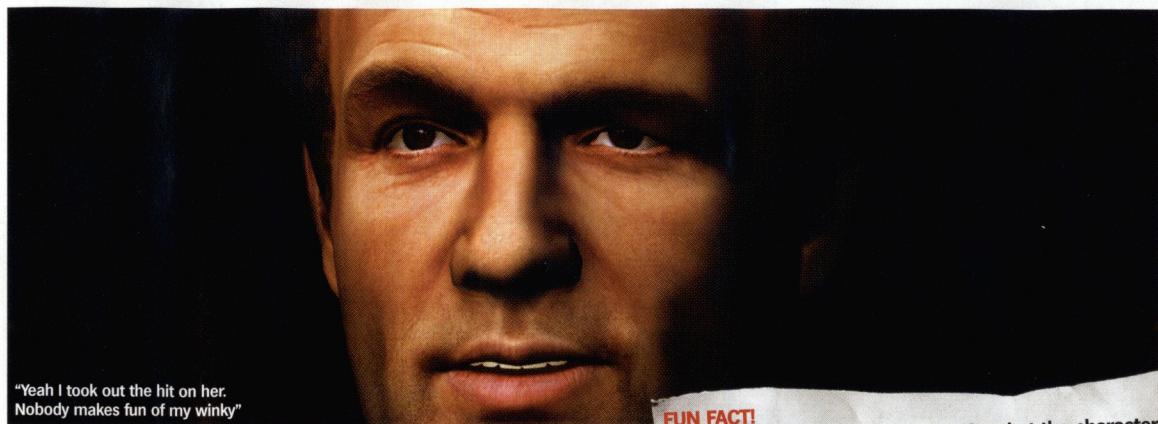
After first appearing early last year, *Black* has already been in development for quite some time. We definitely want to get back in black, but even though there's still a while to wait, we've seen nothing to suggest it won't be well worth it. **Luke Reilly**

FUN FACT!

Rumour has it that *Black* has been written as a trilogy and that Criterion already has some firm ideas for a second and third game.

**BLACK TO THE FUTURE**

If this is what the future holds for shooters, then we want in on the ground floor. Some of the stuff we saw *Black* doing on a PS2 was bordering on ridiculous. Just when you think the PS2 has run out of surprises, somebody always manages to squeeze a little more out of the old bugger. The fact *Black* can still impress the hell out of us mere hours after we saw what *Killzone* will look like on PS3 is testimony to that. The PS2 certainly isn't going to go quietly into the night with titles like this, that's for sure. We can't wait to get our grubby little hands on this baby.

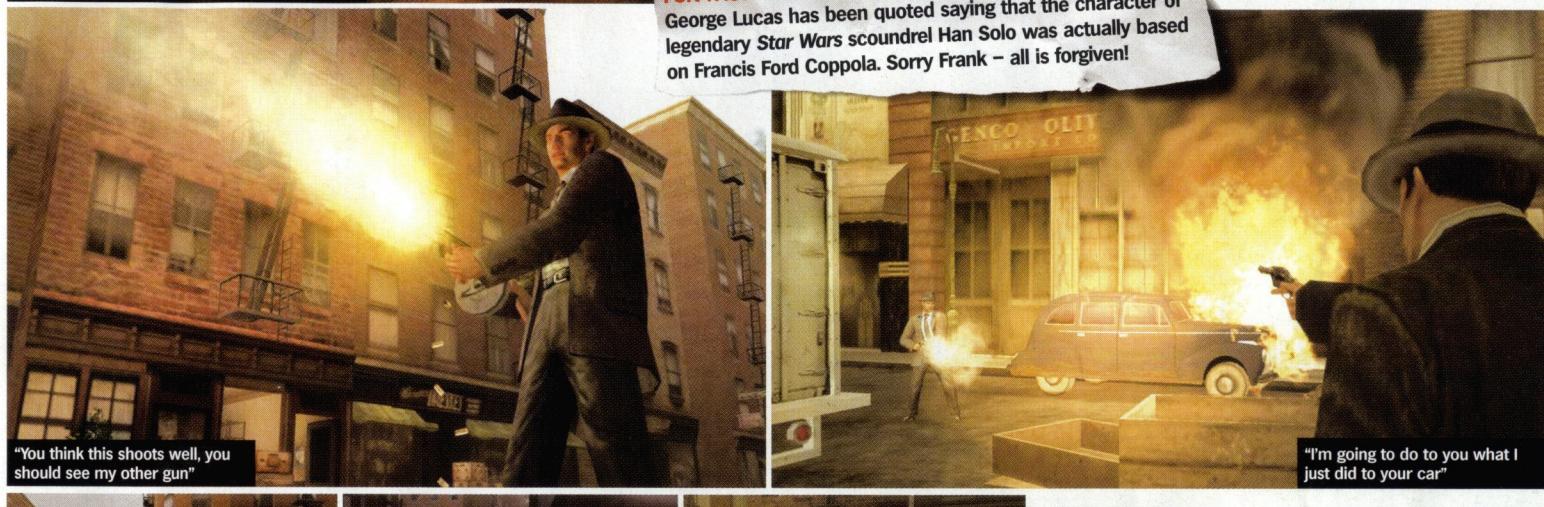


NEW SCREENS AND INFO

PLAYERS: 1
DISTRIBUTOR: EA
DEVELOPER: EA
WEBSITE: WWW.GODFATHERGAME.COM
LAST SEEN: OPS2 #39
RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER

70%

THE GODFATHER is going to put all eyes on EA; it's based on a film that almost everyone has seen and a license that brings with it the loftiest of expectations. It's also set for inevitable comparisons with the illustrious GTA series. Can EA beat Rockstar at its own game?



X ADVENTURE

THE GODFATHER

"It's-a looking-a good-a!" exclaimed a passing Italian stereotype

So what if Francis Ford Coppola doesn't approve – actors Robert Duvall, James Caan and even the late, great Marlon Brando are all on board and really, Francis? What have you done for us lately? Oh, you produced *Jeepers Creepers*, parts one and two? Talk about Francis Ford Crapola.

EA has recruited the talents of over 20 of the actors and actresses from the original *Godfather* film to provide voices and likenesses for their virtual counterparts. Mark Winegardner, author of the 2004 novel *The Godfather Returns*, has also been hired to pen the script and provide valuable insight, ensuring a highly authentic recreation of one of the greatest films of all time; from the rustic aesthetic of the post WW2 setting right down to the bulges in Brando's cheeks.

As reported previously in OPS2, the game won't follow the plot of the film too closely, allowing for more familiar

moments such as Don Corleone's attempted assassination at the fruit stall to take the player by surprise. The developers are also rather ambitiously putting a heavy focus on non-linear gameplay. *The Godfather the game*, like the film and book, is all about choices, presumably in a similar structure to Activision's *True Crime*, although possibly with even less restrictions on the path of the plot.

It's up to the player as to whether they want to try and solve problems by skilful diplomacy, tact, and subtlety, or just rule the streets of Manhattan with an iron fist to inspire fear and respect in the community. Aside from roaming the streets with a permanent scowl on their face and a violin case under one arm, players will also be able to enjoy the other perks of everyday gangster life; drive-by shootings, negotiations, torture, kidnapping and large family dinners (pass the cannoli).

Over the ten year period of the game, players will

SHOOT THE HOSTAGE

As you can see in this screenshot, enemies in *The Godfather* will at times take innocents hostage during moments of conflict. A glance at a fact sheet for the game reveals the slightly mysterious term 'Pressure Point', leaving us to speculate as to whether you can actually target specific areas on a foe, potentially shooting guns out of their hands or even between the hostage's legs, *Robocop*-style.



noticeably age; gain weight and find grey hairs where there were no grey hairs before. We're not sure yet if you'll have to endure the other trappings of old age; such as slower reflexes, incontinence and an appreciation of the flavour of ginger. You know, the fun stuff.

As soon as we know more about it we'll spill more sauce than a broken jar of Dolmio, but from what we've seen so far things are looking quite solid; there's nothing that stands out in a big way but there's no noticeable severed horse head messing up the bed sheets either – will we ever get that stain out? **Tristan Ogilvie**

Pre-play

WEIRD WORLD OF SPORTS

Rugby League has always had its detractors, but have they seen what goes on in other sports?



Nothing says "good job" like a prod in the scrotum. Otherwise, it's just not cricket.



You call this football? You're supposed to sack the QB, not get kicked in the sack.



Is that a strike? If it's a ball he only needs one more and he'll get a walk.



In case you need proof soccer is rife with issues, here's a pic of Vinnie Jones making friends...



This is a little more hardcore than just a finger up the date. Only just though.

HANDS-ON

PLAYERS: 1-8 (ONLINE)

DISTRIBUTOR: HES

DEVELOPER: SIDHE INTERACTIVE

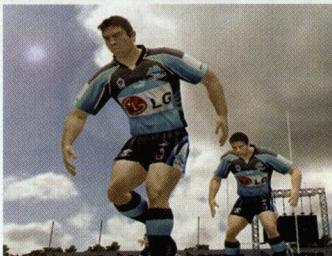
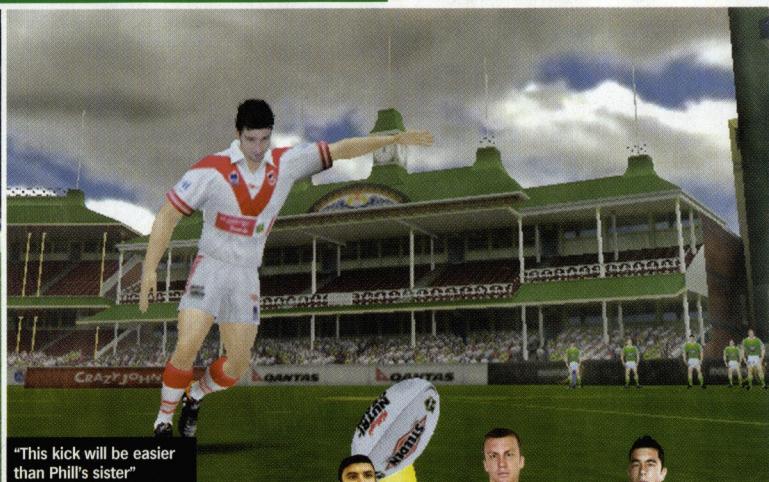
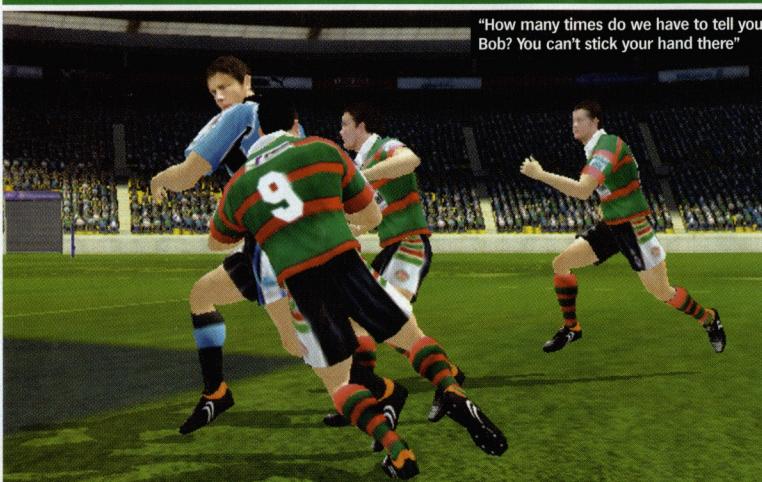
WEBSITE: WWW.RUGBYLEAGUE2.COM

LAST SEEN: OPS2 #39

RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER

70%

RUGBY LEAGUE 2 is definitely a few goosesteps closer than its predecessor to being a faithful recreation of Rugby League, sans the sex allegations.



X SPORTS

RUGBY LEAGUE 2

Bring back the biff!

The original Rugby League debuted on Australian charts at number one and not only went on to become the most successful locally-made PS2 game since the console launched, but also went on to outsell every other sports game on the PS2! With footy season in full swing, you can bet we're looking forward to breaking out a slab and sitting down with the finished product in a few months – especially after some recent hands-on time. We don't mean Bulldogs' style 'hands-on' either; we mean we've had a crack at a recent build of the game. The graphics have improved by leaps and bounds, the controls are tighter than a duck's bum and there are more modes than you can poke a Brisbane cheerleader at. And we don't know anybody who wouldn't like to poke a Brisbane cheerleader (want to ride on a real bronco, ladies?)

You may be wondering exactly how did Rugby League 2 make such giant steps in the visual department. The answer

is simple. HES enlisted Weta Digital – the effects magicians behind *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy – to take the mugs of around 500 NRL players and referees and cram them into the game. If you think this kind of attention to detail doesn't happen outside of an EA sports game – think again. They're so impressive, we're sure the digital Craig Wing will still be enough to make your sister swoon.

The improvements don't stop in the looks department either. Plenty of time has been spent with the controls too, and even at this point they're infinitely more intuitive than the original. While on defence you'll change players along the line in either direction with the **L1** and **R1** buttons, but if your opponent makes a line break tapping **L1** and **R1** together will send you straight to the fullback without the need for frantic button bashing. Tapping them together on offence will pass the ball directly to your playmaker, which is very useful in fifth-tackle situations. Cut-out passes are easier to execute too.

FUN FACT!

In order to exclude as few people as possible from enjoying the game, Rugby League 2 will feature optional subtitled commentary for the deaf and a colour-blind system for the... colour-blind.

If you thought Rugby League was more short-lived than an intimate liaison with Paul, you may want to stock the bar-fridge for Rugby League 2's 10-year franchise mode. You don't just have to win the Premiership – wait until you've got contract negotiations, salary caps, injuries, the judiciary and training to worry about. Add State of Origin, UK Super League, City Vs Country, Tests and improved customisation options and you'll have a comprehensive package (unlike Tristan's embarrassing package).

If you're still unconvinced about upgrading come this September, keep in mind Rugby League 2 may be the only way you'll see Newcastle win a game this year, and the only way to have a full NRL team in your house without losing all your booze, having your dog shaved and getting your wife pregnant (and possibly shaved too). There's still a way to go before the siren, so stick around – we'll have plenty more right after halftime. ▶ Luke Reilly



JUST IMAGINE THE SCHOOL REUNION.

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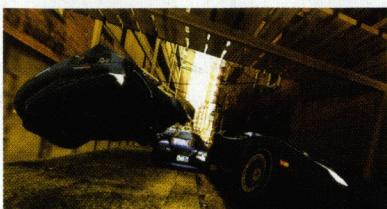
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Pre-play



X RACING



HANDS-ON

PLAYERS: 1-2 (2-8 ONLINE)

DISTRIBUTOR: EA

DEVELOPER: CRITERION

WEBSITE: WWW.EAGAMES.COM

LAST SEEN: OPS2 #41

RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

70%

BURNOUT: REVENGE

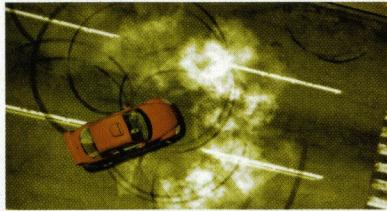
It's not road rage – it's road carnage!

If our story on *Burnout: Revenge* last month didn't make your underpants swell like a balloon then check your pulse because you might be dead – either that or you must be hung like Phillip. The ability to bash into anything on the road, compete against literally 100s of opponents and a new mode that lets you drive like you're in a straight jacket and annihilate anything on wheels are just a few of the new features. Besides rolling around in a pool of KY jelly with Elisha Cuthbert, we can't think of anything else we'd add.

The biggest change to the series is being able to ram almost anything on the streets (as well as rival cars, traffic cars travelling in the same direction will now be fair game). After causing our first pile-up, it was tough to stop ourselves leaving the streets resembling a wrecking yard. In one race we took a huge lead when we caused a prang involving three

hatchbacks, a sedan, a bus and two trucks. We were causing the sort of accidents that tow truck drivers only fantasise about.

We've got a fever and the only prescription is more *Burnout: Revenge*. It's already a 10 out of 10 game and it's not even finished yet. We're praying for another date with *Burnout: Revenge* very soon – we're waiting by the phone for the call. We'll keep you posted. **Paul Frew**



X RACING



HANDS-ON

PLAYERS: 1-2

DISTRIBUTOR: EA

DEVELOPER: EA

WEBSITE: WWW.EAGAMES.COM

LAST SEEN: OPS2 #41

RELEASE DATE: DECEMBER

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

70%

NEED FOR SPEED MOST WANTED

Time for a suntan and some street racing

Instead of just releasing *Need For Speed Underground 3*, EA has decided to go back to its roots and bring back the Hollywood-style car chases that *NFS Hot Pursuit* introduced.

In *Most Wanted* you'll cruise around a metropolis style city like you did in *NFSU2*. However instead of getting respect and love from the world, your main task now is to get the cops as angry as a neutered dog. This is done by participating in various highly illegal activities so that you can get your name at the top of the dreaded Black List.

Just like in *Underground*, customisation plays a big part in *Most Wanted*. Obviously the cops will be continually changing their tactics, so you'll need to constantly upgrade your wheels. Lose your edge and they'll take you downtown, send you to the slammer and you can expect to spend the next few years being passed around like a piece of meat for cigarettes. We've spotted

BMWs and Mazdas so far, but the rest of the garage is still a mystery. We're pretty confident that the car companies will be lining up outside EA right now begging to be a part of it.

Most Wanted is fast becoming one of our own most wanted games of 2005. We'll have more on it next month with some brand new exclusive information. You know it! **Paul Frew**



LIFE AND DEATH. IT'S NOTHING BUT A GAME...

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- DVD Vision Japan

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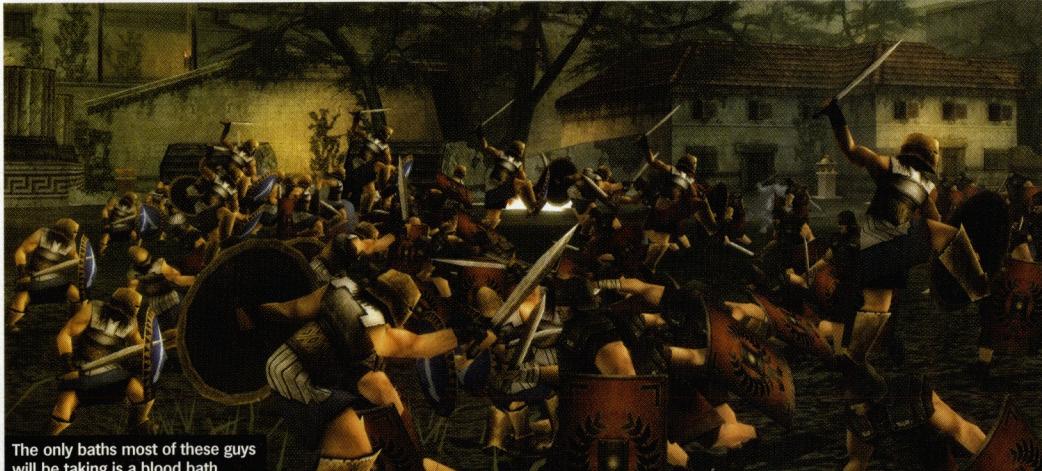
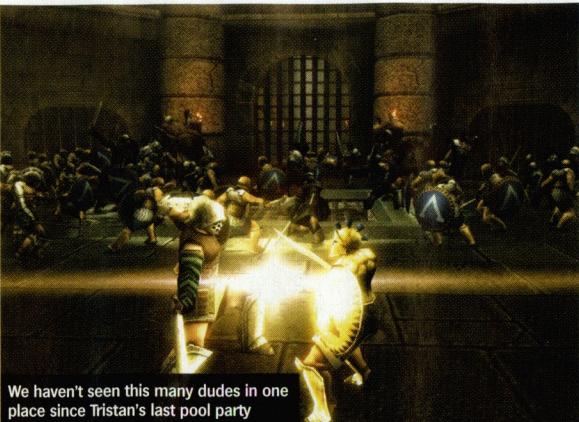
HANDS-ON

PLAYERS: 1
DISTRIBUTOR: THQ
DEVELOPER: THE CREATIVE ASSEMBLY
WEBSITE: WWW.CREATIVE-ASSEMBLY.CO.UK
LAST SEEN: FIRST LOOK
RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER

50%



We haven't seen this many dudes in one place since Tristan's last pool party

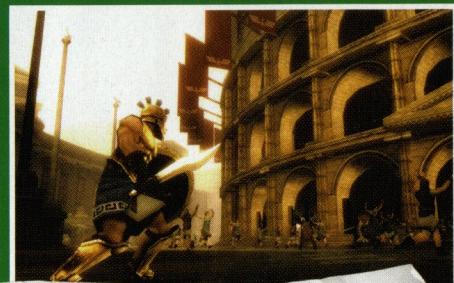


The only baths most of these guys will be taking is a blood bath



BLOOD SPORT

Separate to the single campaign, the Arena mode will throw you straight into a massive battle without any story getting in the way. Arena mode is all about killing everyone in your face, unless they're in your army. Each battle will consist of 10 rounds. The first battle will be as easier than getting Luke to streak in public, but the longer you survive the tougher it'll be to keep your head. There'll be six arenas for you to spill blood in, the coolest being the Coliseum. However there are also a grass field and even a dungeon for those who like it a little rough. The only disappointment is that Orlando Bloom isn't anywhere to be found because we'd love to give him a good bashing.



FUN FACT!

All of the sound in *Spartan: Total Warrior* is being recorded at The Creative Assembly studio in Brisbane.

1

My sword's bigger than yours.

Sure it's awesome being an American gung-ho action hero who can take down a worldwide evil organisation without breaking a sweat. But after seeing the epic battle scenes in movies like *Lord of the Rings* and *Troy*, being just one of the boys in an army and getting into massive sword-clanging battles can be every bit as exciting.

In *Spartan: Total Warrior* you'll be a lot more than just one of the boys though. In the opening level you discover that you're packing some serious super powers like thunder strikes and Hulk-style strength. All of a sudden you're hot property. So what do you do with this talent? Go to the local bar and tell chicks you're a storm in the sack? No, you sign up for the Spartan army and defend your turf against the evil Romans. That wouldn't have been our first choice, but then again our first choice would probably get the game banned faster than *Leisure Suit Larry*.

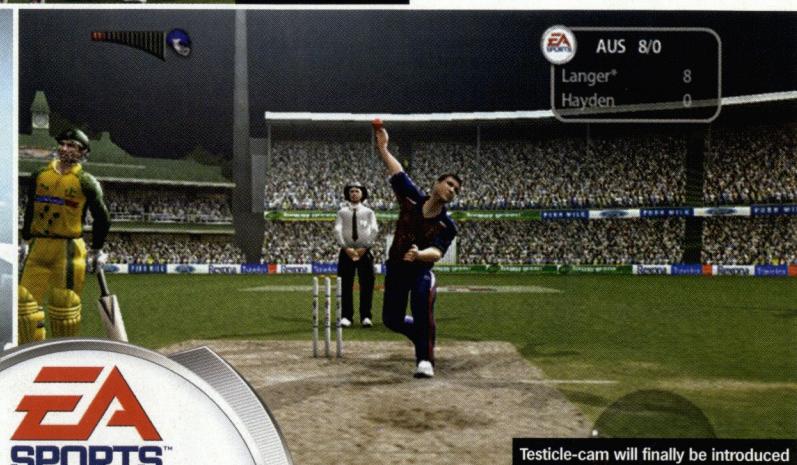
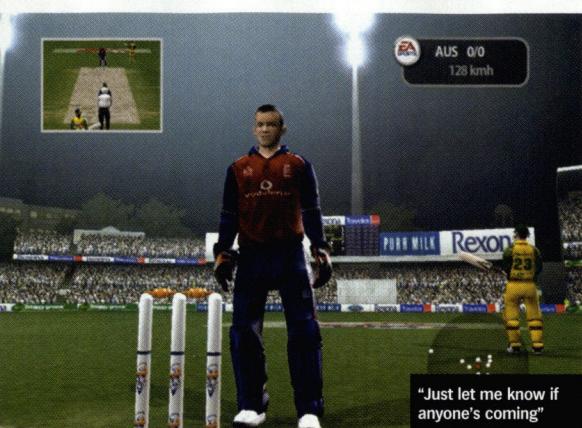
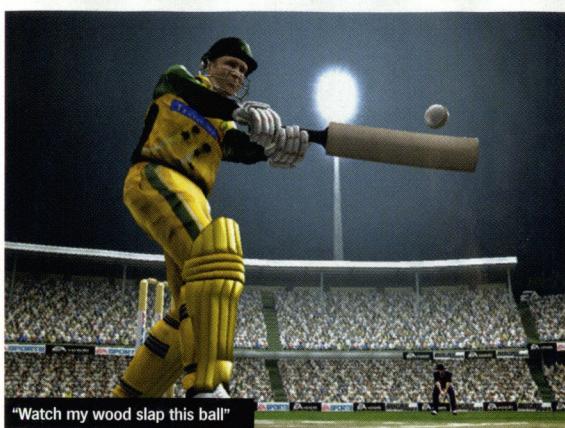
The missions in *Spartan* will vary, but the majority of the time you'll be in the thick of intense brawls, using more medieval toys than Nick has stashed under his bed. Did we mention these battles are frickin' huge? Spartan somehow manages 180 head-smashing soldiers on-screen at once – kind of like an English soccer match but with whopping-great swords instead of broken cricket bats.

You'd think that with 180 Spartans on-screen the graphics engine would be getting a little choppy. Think again. At the risk of sounding camp – *Spartan* looks gorgeous! Every one of the hundred-plus characters on-screen is detailed to the point that you can see their armour glistening in the sun and their clothing flapping in the wind. What's even better is watching these guys get diced into dog food by your own bloody hands. There's two buttons dedicated to hacking and slashing, but if you want to avoid seeing your guts spill onto the ground then you'll

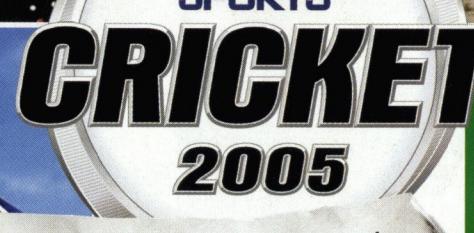
also need to use your shield. Smashing the buttons like an ADD pedestrian at a traffic light doesn't work either. You need to find a balance between attacking and defending, which is challenging but not too frustrating.

Spartan: Total Warrior looks to be the thinking man's hack and slasher. If you were amazed at the size of the battles in movies like *Lord of the Rings*, then you're not only going to be impressed with the size of the battles in *Spartan* but also their intensity! Bring it on!  Paul Frew



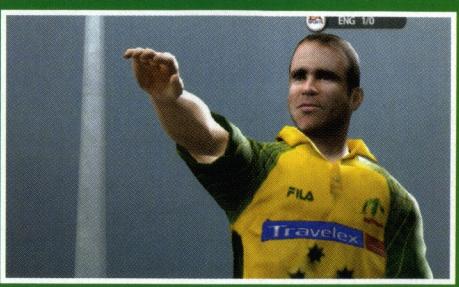


FUN FACT!
Richie Benaud will feature in both EA Cricket 2005 and Ricky Ponting International Cricket. In this game he'll be commenting and in RPIC he'll be featured in the classic matches. He sure gets around for a 74 year old.



EXTREME MAKEOVER

You can now edit players in EA Cricket 2005 thanks to the same technology used in games like *FIFA*. If you've played *FIFA* then you'll immediately be at home with the system. You can create yourself and get where the action is or you can edit the look of current players just in case they get a haircut after EA Cricket 2005 comes out. Or if you just want to cut Gillespie's mullet into a respectable haircut then you can do that too. Damn hippy.



CRICKET 2005

The balls are so polished you can see your face in them

We've gone on and on about how good Cricket 2005 looks to the point that we sound like pansies continually talking about how awesome a bunch of guys look. So we'll tell you how it plays. You can throw the ball in the air like you've just caught a classic catch because Cricket 2005 will carry a bigger package than Ron Jeremy. We're talking about its gameplay package by the way. What did you think we were talking about? As well as the improvement in visuals, the gameplay in Cricket 2005 has been given a tune-up bigger than anything on MTV's *Pimp My Ride*.

Bowling is no longer a hit-the-button-put-down-the-controller-and-skull-a-beer affair like it was in previous cricket games. You'll still select your delivery-type and where the ball will bounce the same way as before, but now you'll also tell the bowler when to stop and unleash his fury. There'll be a meter in the bottom left-hand corner indicating your run to

the crease. You need to hit the button when you're on the crease so the bowler can stop and do his thing. If you pull up too early then you'll get smashed around the park. If your delivery is slow it'll be easier to nail than Paris Hilton. Hit it too late and you'll give away a run for a no ball. If you consistently bowl well though then you'll build up your Special Delivery meter (no, it's not a mail-order bride). This is your bowler's finishing move – that once unleashed will turn the wickets into sawdust. The meter will stay filled if you continually send batsman to the locker room, however it only takes one defensive shot to drain the meter.

Batting is also more than just holding your wood in Cricket 2005. You'll now have a larger arsenal of shots than you did in previous EA Cricket titles. You'll begin by choosing to play a shot off the back foot or the front foot. Both options have different types of shots you can play. There is also a similar meter to the Special Delivery meter that measures

your confidence. If you've got less confidence than the school chess captain then the only place you'll send all the high balls are into the fielders' hands. However, once you've found your rhythm and built up your meter then you can start going for the big boundaries and the super sixes. You'll need to ease into the batting to avoid messing up your balls.

As you can tell, EA Cricket 2005 has already taken a few brave steps away from the shallow end of the pool, where the last game paddled about. It's still not perfect but hopefully it will be ready to go by the time it's paddled up. **Paul Frew**

HANDS-ON

PLAYERS: 1-2

DISTRIBUTOR: EA

DEVELOPER: HB STUDIOS

WEBSITE: WWW.EAPLAY.COM/AUSTRALIA

LAST SEEN: OPS2 #40

RELEASE DATE: LATE 2005

90%

CRICKET 2005 finally uses the same kick ass graphics engine that every other EA Sports game has been using since the launch of the PS2. Throw in the world's greatest cricketers, all of the local and international tournaments and some of the best stadiums around the globe and it looks like EA has the recipe for the best cricket game ever.

X SPORT

AUS 0/0

Langer* 8
Hayden 0

Testicle-cam will finally be introduced in EA Sports Cricket 2005

ENG 1/0

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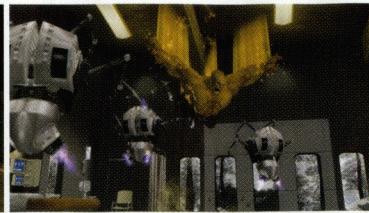
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Pre-play



X ACTION



FANTASTIC FOUR

Comic-movie-to-cross-platform-video-games – so hot right now!

Rejoice, Marvel geeks. Straight from the floor at E3 we spotted a host of footage from Activision's eminent *Fantastic Four* third-person biff and blast escapade. It's headed to the PS2 in just a few short weeks and looks, erm... fantastic – or maybe it's marvelous? We just don't know.

For those unfamiliar with the franchise, it's a Marvel comic about four space workers who turn into superheroes when hit by cosmic rays. Reed Richards, a superb inventor and computer hacker, finds he can stretch and manipulate his body into any shape conceivable. Turning down a lucrative career in German Scheizer films, Reed leads the posse. Ben Grimm turns into a rock-like ogre with immeasurable strength. Johnny Storm can transform his body into a flying flame, while his sister, Sue Storm, inherits powers of invisibility and telekinesis – surely the best recipe for a girlfriend ever (honey, can you pass another beer before coming to work with me

naked and invisible for a bit of on-the-job therapy?).

Apart from the characters being totally different in playing styles, each has a skull-splitting arsenal of no less than 40 moves. The game has also been specifically designed for single and two-player co-op play. While two-players is the maximum, at times all *Fantastic Four* members will be fighting on-screen thanks to the AI, with players free to skip over and control whomever they want. We'll have a review soon, so check back to see if it's indeed fantastic, or just a four. **• James Ellis**



Fantastically Marvelous

Bright, vibrant, and in-ya-face is the name of the game when it comes to *F4*'s silky visuals. Every move and in-game effect has been given the colour-splattered treatment to ensure *F4* will look as over-the-top as the heroes on screen. And that Sue Storm... phew, what a hottie.



X ACTION



24: THE GAME

The clock starts... now

The first thing that comes to mind when we think about *24: The Game* is how long it will last. Well, it will actually be 24 hours long – and it will probably be the most action-packed 24 hours of your lifetime.

In these 24 hours you'll be shooting bad guys, chasing bad guys, interrogating bad guys, sniping bad guys and using cool gadgets (to, you guessed it, hunt down bad guys). There are around 100 missions and each one has a time limit to complete. In one mission we checked out, we had five minutes to track down a guy with information we needed in order to get our next lead. The clock ticked down in real time and naturally, because we're awesome, we caught the dude with a little time to spare. The cool thing was the time then changed (like it does during ad breaks) to accommodate for our awesomeness. However, if

you do fail the mission then the story will continue. It just means you now have to gather the intel from another source.

The game looks and plays just like the TV show. There are multi-angle camera shots to show all sides of the action, the story is told with multiple windows to show plot development and there are no load times at all. Our clock is now counting down to when we can get our hands on it again. Tick tock, tick tock. **• Paul Frew**

HANDS-ON

PLAYERS: 1-2

DISTRIBUTOR: ACTIVISION

DEVELOPER: 7 STUDIOS

WEBSITE: WWW.SEVENSTUDIOS.COM

LAST SEEN: OPS2 #38

RELEASE DATE: JULY

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

90%

FANTASTIC FOUR looks like every other scrolling bruiser on a trippy cocktail of steroids and amphetamines. The game moves with pace, polish and fluidity, and the two-player mode is shaping up to be the best co-op experience on the PS2.

FIRST LOOK

PLAYERS: 1

DISTRIBUTOR: SONY

DEVELOPER: SCE STUDIOS

WEBSITE: WWW.FOX.COM/24/GAME

LAST SEEN: FIRST LOOK

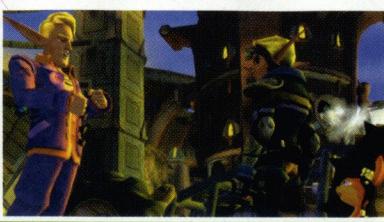
RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

80%

24: The Game is set between Seasons 1 and 2 of the hit show. The game will answer many questions that were left unanswered plus it will have the delicious Elisha Cuthbert in it. We're sold.





X RACING

JAK X: COMBAT RACING

It's time to hit the road Jak

Just like it did with *Jak II* in the platforming genre, *Jak X: Combat Racing* is looking to drive the cute and cuddliness of the go-kart genre into the ground for good. *Jak X* isn't about collecting banana peels and using them to leave your foes spinning around like a ballerina. It's about taking out the checkered flag while taking out your enemies with weapons of mass destruction – simultaneously, baby.

The drivers in *Jak X* are ruthless and taking them out is about as easy as chatting with Angelina Jolie without staring at her chest. OPS2 doesn't recommend this (we're still nursing a broken jaw from our last 'chat'). There's no time to sit back and take in the hours of serenity when racing in *Jak X*. It seems like every second there's bullets skimming past your big ears, mines scattered like Jaffa's in a movie theatre and homing missiles so far up your ass it'll be weeks before you can sit down again.

Your ride will be packing some serious heat to help

you survive the carnage. All the vehicles will be decked out with a standard weapon that sprays bullets like a fire hose. However, throughout the race there'll also be some heavy-duty explosives to pick up with some leaving the moon's craters looking like a baby's footprint in the sand.

As you can tell, *Jak X* won't be your typical 'chug around the track' kart game. You'll be fighting to the death until the very end, or at least until your car is toasted. We should be taking *Jak X: Combat Racing* for a longer test drive in coming issues, so stay tuned for the results. **Paul Frew**



HANDS-ON

PLAYERS: 1-2 (1-6 ONLINE)

DISTRIBUTOR: SONY

DEVELOPER: NAUGHTY DOG

WEBSITE: WWW.NAUGHTYDOG.COM

LAST SEEN: OPS2 #41

RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER

60%

JAK X: COMBAT RACING dumps you in the Kras City Grand Championship where you'll speed through explosive races on some of the toughest tracks this side of Redfern. It'll be similar to *Mad Max*... just with more fury rat-like critters.



X ACTION

RATCHET: DEADLOCKED

Ratchet gets his L-plates but drives like a P-plater

Insomniac seems to be stuffing as much into *Ratchet: Deadlocked* as Tristan does into his gym shorts – he swears its all-natural but it looks to us like he's smuggling plums. In the latest version of *Deadlocked* we got to take some of Ratchet's pimped out rides for a spin. We found plenty of nuts and bolts but didn't get any screws.

The first ride we hopped on, the hoverbike, darts around like it's in a pinball machine but is ideal for avoiding bullet showers (make sure you don't get hit because its armour is very light). We also took to the air with a helicopter-like machine that buried foes six feet

under thanks to its heavy artillery. The big poppa however was the Puma. The Puma is a massive tank that can leave a hole in the ground the size of a sumo wrestler's ass. If you're on foot when one of these bad boys is cruising through town then you better leg it fast.

We also checked out the new weapon upgrade system. Forget about buying goods off dodgy vendors like Nick does with his magazines (let's just say he doesn't read them for the articles). Now you've got to build your own weapons with items you find on the battlefield. It'll be kind of like a cocktail party. You mix the ingredients and then you get wasted.

So how much more can Insomniac fit into *Deadlocked*? We have no idea, but if it continues adding new features then the game is going to have so much in it that you might have to skip Christmas this year. It's ok, Santa's not real so he won't mind. **Paul Frew**



HANDS-ON

PLAYERS: 1-2 (1-8 ONLINE)

DISTRIBUTOR: SONY

DEVELOPER: INSOMNIAC

WEBSITE: WWW.INSOMNIACGAMES.COM

LAST SEEN: OPS2 #41

RELEASE DATE: DECEMBER

60%

RATCHET: DEADLOCKED splits up the dynamic duo with Ratchet entering a brutal combat show called Dreadzone and Clark staying behind to provide assistance via radio. Being a hero is tough.



GOD OF WAR™

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Computer Entertainment America Inc. Published by Sony Computer Entertainment Europe. SPS1641



Pre-play



X ACTION



X ACTION



JAMES BOND: FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE

The name's Connery, Sean Connery

We're talking classic Bond. Sean Connery's voice and likeness is set to star in EA's brand new *James Bond: From Russia with Love*, a game set in the same third-person vein as *Everything or Nothing*.

Based around the events of the classic film with a few new scenarios, gadgets, and characters thrown in for good measure, the developers are striving to make this the best *Bond* game ever. Each mission can be undertaken in a variety of ways, and vehicles will play a major role too. Just because he can, Bond will be

able to hit the sea on boats, take to the air in a helicopter and even hover around in the classic rocket-pack. Who knows, all this action may get Bond pussy galore?

The game will tout four-player split-screen support, along with a number of multiplayer game modes. Expect to be breaking out the Martini glasses around Spring. **James Ellis**

DETAILS

PLAYERS: 1-4

DISTRIBUTOR: EA

DEVELOPER: EA



X ADVENTURE



SHADOW OF THE COLOSSUS

Pick on someone your own size!

Did you know the plural of colossus is colossi? Yeah, we didn't either. Of course, this means the title of Sony's spiritual successor to the critically acclaimed *Ico* is a little misleading. There's certainly not just one of them, we can assure you of that.

Sony's new giant-killer is just that – a giant-killer. As a lone horseman, your quest to retrieve the soul of a trapped young girl means you must seek out and slay the massive Colossi that roam the world.

And as Naz would say when he's trying to pick up chicks, they're 'freakin' huge'.

Before you can liquidate them though you'll need to find their weakness, then scale the beast and deliver your deathblow. Once you're done however, you'll need to find the next one, then rinse and repeat.

Just as beautiful as *Ico* and far more epic in nature, *Shadow of the Colossus* may never hit as big as its name, but it's shaping up very well indeed. **Luke Reilly**

DETAILS

PLAYERS: 1

DISTRIBUTOR: SONY

DEVELOPER: SONY



X ACTION



THE WARRIORS

"Come out to plaa-aay!"

In case you missed our exclusive feature last month (where were you? What are you, stupid?) *The Warriors* is a new gangland thriller from the infamous Rockstar.

Based on the 1979 film of the same name *The Warriors* is easily the most desperate, vicious and violent brawler we've seen in a long time. Think *Double Dragon* infused with a little *Manhunt* and a lot of class and you're close.

It's all about down and dirty fisticuffs in New York's unforgiving neon underground – there are no rules and no second place. You'll have full gang control of your other Warriors and a swag of bone crunching moves and weapons to use.

There'll also be specific scenes recreated from the film, but it's not necessary to rush out and buy it to enjoy the game.

Rockstar hasn't fired off a dud in recent memory, and after seeing it in action recently we can assure you *The Warriors* is not going to disappoint. The super-cool '70s vibe and unbridled ferocity is fantastic. We can definitely dig it – can you dig it, suckers? **Luke Reilly**

DETAILS

PLAYERS: 1

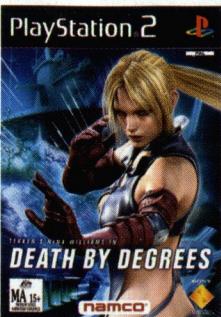
DISTRIBUTOR: TAKE 2

DEVELOPER: ROCKSTAR TORONTO



**BE WARNED,
NINA COMES
WITH BAGGAGE.**

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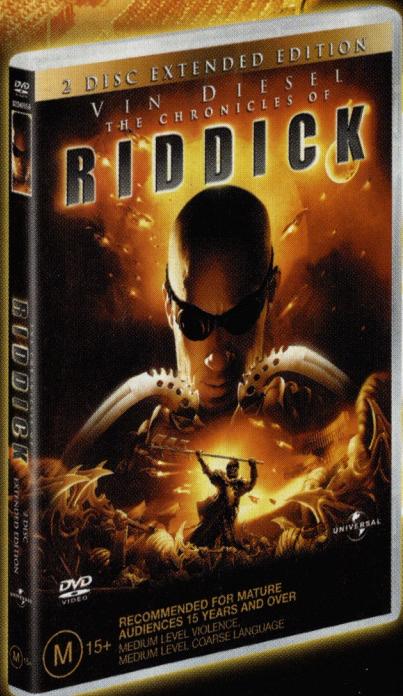
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X ACTION

BATTLEFIELD 2: MODERN COMBAT

I love the smell of napalm in the morning...

After the success of *Star Wars: Battlefront* it was only a matter of time before Electronic Arts took another bite from the warfront apple. We're glad they did, with the enormously successful *Battlefield* series coming to PS2.

All the trademark features are here with a large line-up of vehicles to commandeer, weapons of mass and minor destruction and a genre-changing addition called the 'Hot Swap'. No, we don't mean trading in your girlfriend for a night with Paris Hilton. We mean switching positions with any ally on the battlefield with the press of a button. Needing some covering fire? Hot Swap

to a sniper and pin your enemies down, get into a chopper and wipe them out, or just run them all over with a tank. The positions you can use are endless – just like that night we spent with Paris actually. *Battlefield 2* looks to be just that – an enormous battlefield covered in blood, bullet shells and enough unidentifiable limbs that you could use them to make up a psychopath's jigsaw puzzle. Sign us up! **▲ Dave Kozicki**

DETAILS

PLAYERS: 1-24 (ONLINE)

DISTRIBUTOR: EA

DEVELOPER: DIGITAL ILLUSIONS (CE)



X PLATFORMER

SHADOW THE HEDGEHOG

Move over Sonic!

After his debut in *Sonic Adventure 2*, Shadow has emerged as quite a popular character recently. So popular, in fact, that Sega has spiked Sonic to give Shadow the lead role in his own game. Created as the ultimate life form (they obviously never met Paul's sister) Shadow is tormented by his own dark past. His forgotten memories (forgotten memories – anybody else have a problem with this?) are his only clues – but they can only be unlocked by the power of the seven chaos emeralds. So guess what, you're going to be finding those emeralds.

Once the game gets going the story

takes a back seat faster than Nick's girlfriend. Shadow can kit himself out with a variety of weapons, ride motorcycles and alien craft and develop special chaos skills, like the ability to control time and space.

Players can decide to stay on the path of good or stroll down the path of evil, and choices that the player makes will determine the progression of the story. See you around, Sonic. **▲ Luke Reilly**

DETAILS

PLAYERS: 1

DISTRIBUTOR: THQ

DEVELOPER: SEGA





X ACTION



X ACTION



THE INCREDIBLE HULK: ULTIMATE DESTRUCTION

We like him when he's angry

There's a guilty thrill to be had with games that involve little more than destroying everything in your path. The Hulk's newest outing looks set to provide just that. How about we rip a car in two and use the halves as oversized metal fists. What about using a bus as a shield? No worries. In between missions you can even take some time out to destroy anything and everything you like. Well, *almost* everything.

Developer Radical has set the game up to be as free-roaming as possible, while still offering missions and boss battles. While we assume the missions won't extend much further than

destroying stuff, early indications are that we're going to have a hell of a time grinding anything and everything to dust.

Some more good news is that the Bruce Banner levels that made us angry last time have been smashed, crunched and sent away to die. It's going to be all about the Hulk this time.

If you like it mean and green, get ready to hulk-up because this is going to be a smash. **▲ Matthew Sainsbury**

DETAILS

PLAYERS: 1

DISTRIBUTOR: VIVENDI

DEVELOPER: RADICAL

Fact – over 50% of new recruits for the US Navy SEALs were inspired to join by a previous version of SOCOM. Where as James was inspired to serve in the Navy after hearing the Village People song and confusing the definition of gay as meaning happy and cheerful.

This is all significant because it illustrates (a) how influential exceptional videogames are on our society, (b) Americans are a bunch of dumbasses, or (c) all of the above. We choose option (c).

Get ready to see that percentage rise again as SOCOM 3 nears

completion. Zipper could have just slapped on a coat of paint and trotted out a rehashed version, but it's taken it up a few notches since last time.

Your SEALs can now swim to infiltrate enemy bases, take control of vehicles and utilise numerous fully customisable weapons.

Break out the scuba gear and cancel the recruitment drive, this ones should be a keeper. **▲ Dave Kozicki**

DETAILS

PLAYERS: 1-32 (ONLINE)

DISTRIBUTOR: SONY

DEVELOPER: ZIPPER INTERACTIVE



X ACTION



X ACTION



THE MATRIX: PATH OF NEO

We were wrong

Shiny must have seen our preview last month and wanted to make us look like a bunch of liars. You see last month we reported that Neo would feature 1000 guys on screen all at one time, which in itself is an amazing effort. However Shiny has just announced that the game will now feature 1500 guys on-screen at once. Damn that's huge.

In a time when we're lucky to see 10 blokes duke it out on screen at one time, the mind boggles at how insane it would be with 1500 people all on screen at once. All that's running through our head, besides Holly Valance bending over, is the scene in

The Matrix: Revolutions where Neo goes head to head with all the Agent Smiths in the pouring rain. We know it's in the game and it's going to be the biggest and most intense brawl in the history of videogames.

We just hope Shiny doesn't read this and take it up another notch and put 2000 guys on-screen at once. Then again, we won't hold it against them if they did manage to pull that off. **▲ Paul Frew**

DETAILS

PLAYERS: 1

DISTRIBUTOR: ATARI

DEVELOPER: SHINY

Spider-Man 2 the game took games based on comic books to a whole new level and *Ultimate Spider-Man* is looking to continue that trend.

In *Ultimate* you'll once again be spraying your web throughout the streets of New York. However the city has been given a cell-shaded makeover so it looks like a comic has come to life. *Ultimate*'s story will even be told in the traditional comic-book format, similar to that in *Max Payne*.

As with most comics there'll also be a twist and *Ultimate*'s twist is bigger than the one about Bruce Willis being dead in *The Sixth Sense* (I haven't seen that yet. You're fired, Jackass – Ed).

For the first time in any comic book game you'll also get to play as one of Spider-Man's arch villains, Venom. While Venom won't have Spidey's agility and web powers, he will have his brute strength, which the chicks dig.

With *Spider-Man 3* recently announced for the PlayStation 3, it looks like we'll be web-crawling for even longer than last week's *OPS2* pub crawl. **▲ Paul Frew**

DETAILS

PLAYERS: 1

DISTRIBUTOR: ACTIVISION

DEVELOPER: ACTIVISION

Pre-play



X RPG



KINGDOM HEARTS 2

A heart, a heart, my kingdom for a heart!

Sora, Goofy and the ever-lovable psychopath Donald are teaming up again in *Kingdom Hearts 2*. Set a year after the events of the original, the mismatched trio embarks on another very Disney quest to rescue a king and a childhood friend. All the charm of the original will be retained and will be accompanied by stunning visuals that bring the cartoon to life and less frustrating gameplay (that last time left a shortage of Dual Shock controllers on the market).

The best news to come from E3, however, is that the one and only Captain Jack Sparrow from *The*

Pirates of the Caribbean will be present in the sequel. For anyone who's ever wanted to play with Johnny Depp (ahem), here's your big chance. Just don't tell your sister otherwise you'll play your PS2 about as often as Tristan scores with the ladies.

With the wonderful Disney license, *Kingdom Hearts 2* is set to be every bit the winner that its predecessor was. **Matthew Sainsbury**

DETAILS

PLAYERS: 1

DISTRIBUTOR: SONY

DEVELOPER: SQUARE ENIX



X PLATFORMER



SLY 3: HONOR AMONG THIEVES

No prescriptions necessary

Several thought a game looked so lifelike that it could just pop off the screen? Well *Sly 3* is doing just that – except without the lifelike part.

In *Sly 3* you'll need to pop on some sexy raccoon 3D shades to make it through some of the levels alive. Tasks like avoiding lasers and decrypting puzzles will all be in 3D, making the action easier to navigate and reducing the chance of you getting caught with your pants down, like Tristan when Naz comes home from the office.

We took one level for a ride where we were in a bi-plane avoiding

missiles and bombs. It was hilarious trying to avoid death from a pixelated bomb, while the 3D effect left us swaying like drunken sailors.

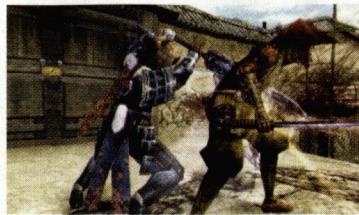
Sucker Punch also plans to add some mini-games that can only be completed in 3D, just to give gamers something to chew on until *Sly 4*. Now we just have to convince developers to do a *Playboy: The Mansion 3D* game... **Paul Frew**

DETAILS

PLAYERS: 1

DISTRIBUTOR: SONY

DEVELOPER: SUCKER PUNCH



X ACTION



ONIMUSHAS: DAWN OF DREAMS

Nothing to do with wet dreams

No longer will you be tackling the various nasties of the *Onimusha* universe alone. For the first time in the series, *Onimusha: Dawn of Dreams* will have you controlling both your main character and an ally simultaneously. Kind of like that time Paul had two cheerleaders at the same time. You'll be able to issue them basic commands like attack and defend, or simply change control on the fly and do all the dirty work yourself. Sounds awesome to us but there's still more to talk about.

Expect to be slicing and dicing in larger, more open-ended landscapes this time around as opposed to the linear

paths in previous *Onimusha* titles. The only thing that will remain from the original series is the same beautiful and cinematic feel that has been present since it first arrived back in 2001.

The few of you who have never played an *Onimusha* game before might want to start polishing your blades, as *Onimusha: Dawn of Dreams* is looking like it could be the best instalment yet. Bonzai! **Matt Sainsbury**

DETAILS

PLAYERS: 1

DISTRIBUTOR: THQ

DEVELOPER: CAPCOM



X ACTION/ADVENTURE



BATMAN BEGINS

Holy Toledo, Batman!

If you're expecting another Batman and Robin-esque tragedy, described in some circles as one 90-minute gay joke, prepare to be surprised. *Batman Begins* is a decidedly darker tale of Gotham City's even darker Knight.

Focusing more on stealth, precision and tactics than corridor after corridor of button-mashing, *Batman Begins* forces you to use the environment and your brains, and not just your fists. Don't panic, because a handy targeting system allows Brucey boy to see which enemies are toting guns, who the leader is and sense each thug's heart rate. A few scares will crank that heart-rate and their behaviour will become more erratic.

Reach pant-soiling stage and they'll cower in fear.

Criterion was consulted for the driving sections of *Batman Begins*, and although it's not quite as slick as the *Burnout* series, hunting down enemies on the streets of Gotham City and destroying them with a well placed missile or two provides a similar thrill.

Still, the best part is there's no sign of that Robin pussy anywhere. **Luke Reilly**

DETAILS

PLAYERS: 1

DISTRIBUTOR: EA

DEVELOPER: EUROCOP



PlayStation 2



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PSPIGANTY

Pre-play



FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER



CALL OF DUTY: BIG RED ONE

What? That Hitler bastard still not dead?

Will WWII ever die? Forget hopping around and controlling soldiers from different countries on different fronts, *Big Red One* is set to take the sort of approach *Band of Brothers* did, that sees you tour with the legendary 'Fighting First' infantry division.

From a gamer's perspective, you can expect a lot of variety with these yanks as 'The Big Red One' were heavily involved in all the major parts of the war. From fighting in North Africa in Operation Torch, to taking on the Italians in Sicily, and hitting occupied France on D-Day.

Apart from the high level of realism the series is known for, *Big Red One* is

promising to use similar enemy AI to that used – and raved about – in the original PC title. So don't expect Hitler's cronies to be like targets in a shooting range, the way they do in most FPS's. You've got to watch out for them because they'll take cover fast and once they start hitting you with bullets you may as well select restart from the pause menu.

It should be schweet – well as schweet as war can get anyway. **James Ellis**

DETAILS

PLAYERS: 1

DISTRIBUTOR: ACTIVISION

DEVELOPER: TREYARCH



BEAT 'EM UP



MARVEL NEMESIS: RISE OF THE IMPERFECTS

We're drooling over some freaky-looking blokes!

It's sure shaping up to be the fighting game for the masses. Featuring Marvel heavyweights Spider-Man, Iron Man, and Wolverine up against a bunch of new characters called The Imperfects (jointly created by EA and Marvel Comics), *Marvel Nemesis* is set to play like a revved up version of the old Dreamcast smash *Powerstone* – but with online play!

Forget your *Tekkens*, *Soul Caliburs*, and *Street Fighters*, this game sees both characters dropped into a 3D rendered area – like the rooftop of Spidey's Daily Bugle building – where they're free to attack each other using whatever they can get their hands on. Missiles, rockets,

lasers, loose objects – everything goes. Not only that, but the arenas have been designed so that they'll crumble and fall to pieces during the bout. Oh yeah, and looks bloody brilliant.

We're loving *Marvel Nemesis* so much that we want to be friends with it. If EA keep it up this could be the ultimate fighting experience we've been yearning for ever since the days of the original *Streetfighter*. **James Ellis**

DETAILS

PLAYERS: 1-2

DISTRIBUTOR: EA

DEVELOPER: EA



ACTION

RESIDENT EVIL 4

Nintendo misses out again, whammy

Eve unveiled some juicy new details about *Resident Evil 4* for the PS2 that is sure to make GameCube owners as crazy as a brain-starved zombie after finding out what they're missing out on.

PS2 owners can expect to see a few new twists on the story featuring the luscious Ada Wong as well as some brand new cut-scenes that are more action packed than all of Arnie's movies combined. But there's more. PS2 owners will also get some extra costumes and weapons to play around with upon completion of the game. How do you like that Nintendo. Taste good?

The three people who bought a GameCube have also been spreading vicious rumours about how *Resident Evil 4* won't look as good on the PS2. Well every single person at E3 who saw RE4 has agreed that it's impossible to tell the difference between them. If you haven't heard it enough from us, *Resident Evil 4* will easily be one of the most impressive and exciting PS2 games of 2005. **Paul Frew**

DETAILS

PLAYERS: 1

DISTRIBUTOR: THQ

DEVELOPER: CAPCOM



FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER

STARGATE SG-1: THE ALLIANCE

Richard Dean! Richard Dean! Richard Dean!

If the OPS2 team were gay, we'd have massive pictures of greying manhunk Richard Dean Anderson wallpapered all over our office. Unfortunately we just have to make do with admiring the man from a purely non-homoerotic standpoint. Regardless, "the artist formerly known as MacGyver" is about to star alongside his SG-1 comrades in an Aussie-made game based on the TV sci-fi hit, *Stargate SG-1*.

Expect first-person shooter goodness running on an enhanced Unreal 2.5 engine, expect authentic vehicles and weapons like the P90 and Jaffa staff from the show, expect to be

able control and give orders to each SG-1 member and utilize their specific skills and finally expect one pain-in-the-keister spectre called Anubis out to take over the universe. It's all on its way and it's all looking hotter than Carmen Electra's *Fit To Strip* DVD – now that's what we call a workout!

Let's just hope it comes together faster than you can say "Richard Dean Anderson for Life". **James Ellis**

DETAILS

PLAYERS: 1-2

DISTRIBUTOR: TBC

DEVELOPER: PERCEPTION



MotoGP 4

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Experience the unbelievable speed of the world's premier motorbike race.
Now featuring the 125cc and 250cc classes for the first time. Exclusive to PlayStation®2.



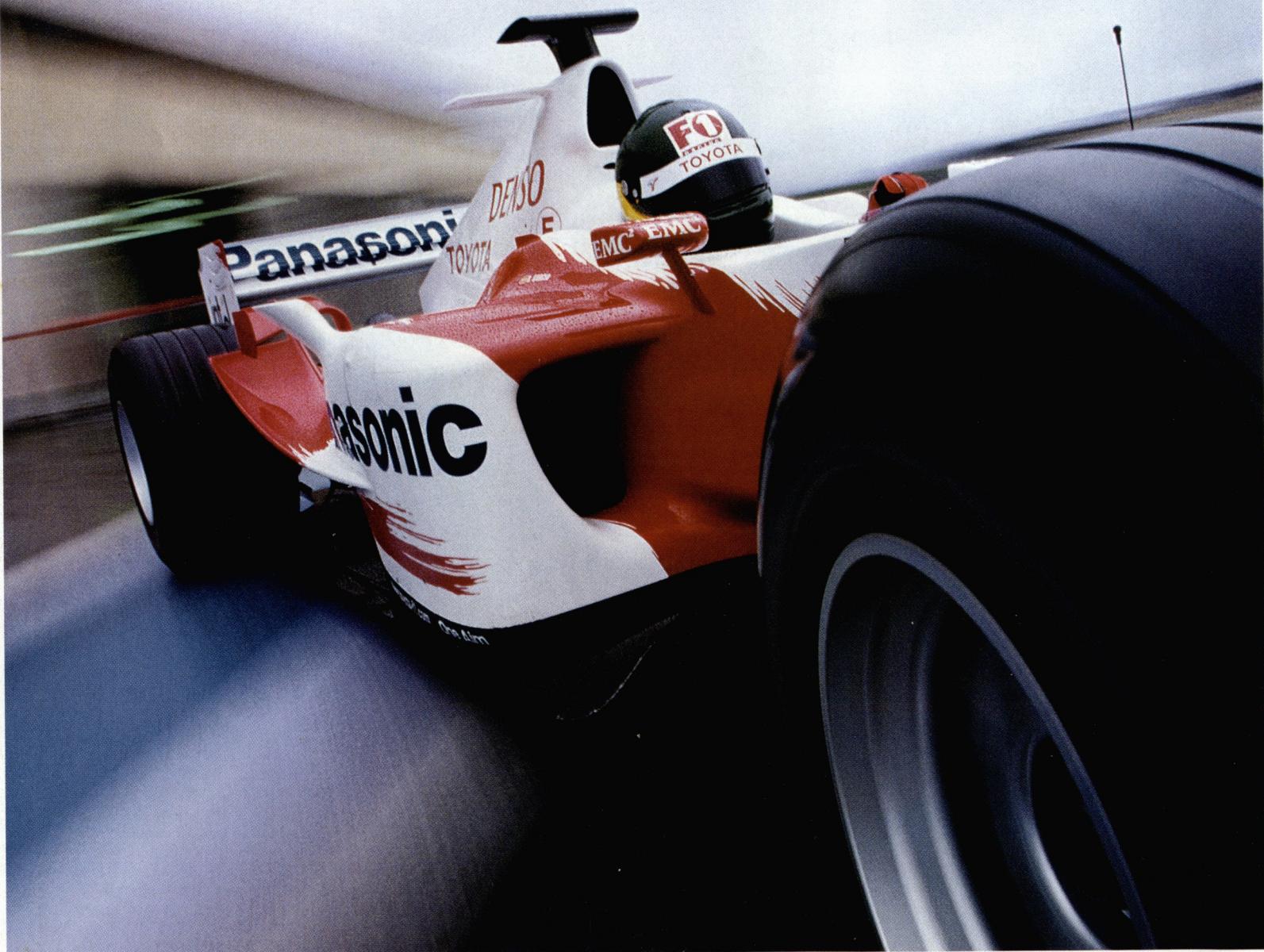
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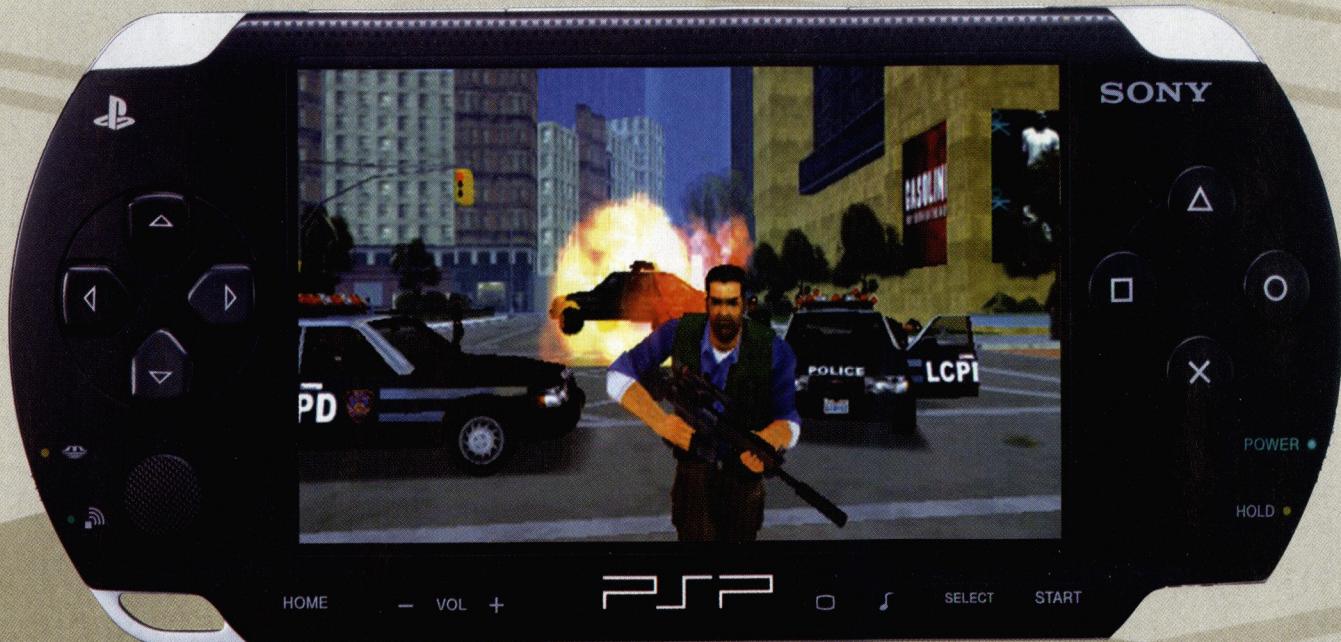
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Liberty City Stories

TOP SECRET

Warning: when you break this seal you will be the second person in the world to see *Grand Theft Auto Liberty City Stories*. Many journalists died to bring you this information*. Our world exclusive report has 14 screens, and full story and gameplay impressions that you won't find in any other magazine!

*Okay, so we lied about getting killed, but we did get really drunk at the E3 parties and our hangovers were pretty nasty.



RETURN OF THE KING

Squeezing the biggest videogame series ever made onto the world's smallest PlayStation was always going to be a challenge. One of the things Rockstar stressed during our look at *Liberty City Stories* was its commitment to deliver a brand new *GTA* adventure without any sacrifices. Disappointing its fans was not an option for Rockstar.

Despite the huge leaps in gameplay offered up by *Vice City* and *San Andreas*, many fans still cite *Liberty City* as their all-time favourite *GTA* location. We've all got a special place in our hearts for our first time, and part of *Liberty City*'s appeal is definitely due to it being the first game that gave us a taste of *GTA*'s now-trademark 'living world'. There's more to *Liberty City*'s appeal than that though. Like *Vice City* and *San Andreas*, *Liberty City* is based on a real place (New York) but its adaptation seems to be even less strict than its sequels, giving Rockstar a greater license to create a really rich and ideally suited landscape for its epic.

Liberty City has a seedy, lived-in feel that permeates every inch of its

three islands. From the crusty build-up of grime on the corners of steps to the untidy piles of rubbish that seemed to crowd every block, *Liberty City* may not have been a nice place but it was definitely a real place, and one that we've got a lot of fond memories of.

So it was with a strange feeling of nervous excitement that we approached the *GTA3* prequel, *Liberty City Stories*. Lucas' recent *Star Wars* travesties have reminded us only too painfully how it's very possible for prequels of much-loved classics to do nothing but undermine and erode all of their former glory. Rockstar has yet to put foot wrong with any *GTA* game, and there's definitely no sign of *Jar Jar Binks* in this prequel, so it looks like it's safe to get excited.

Taking Liberties?

Liberty City Stories is set three years before the events in *GTAIII* and focuses on the story of Toni Cipriani. You might remember Toni Cipriani as the Leone family's mid-level mafia goon in *GTAIII*. Sure he was a hothead and a bit of a mumma's boy, but thanks to the superb voice work by Michael Madsen he was also one of the game's most memorable characters. While Rockstar was not able to confirm at this stage whether Madsen will be returning to reprise his role, it said that high calibre voice-acting, as always, is a huge priority for *Liberty City Stories* and that the cast will not disappoint.

Three years earlier, where *Liberty City Stories* checks in with Toni, he's

trying to put his life back together after being on the run for whacking a made man. He has just returned to *Liberty City* after a period of exile and is beginning to work again for the Leone family. The game's early missions see you proving your worth to the family, but it's not long before you'll find yourself fighting on the front lines of a bitter turf war between the Leone and Sindacco families.

The Leone family had a strong presence in both *GTAIII* and *GTA San Andreas*, so it's fitting that they form the basis for *Liberty City Stories*' plot. Other than Toni, Salvatore Leone (The Don) is the only other character from *GTAIII* that Rockstar has confirmed will be appearing in *Liberty City Stories*.

Mission Impossible

To demonstrate how much Rockstar has learnt since making *GTA III*, the team showed off two of the early missions in *Liberty City Stories*. Both missions threw multiple objectives at the player and had much more going on in them than we were used to in *GTA III*.

Triad mission

This mission takes place about a third of the way through the game's storyline, where the Leone family is fighting a war with the Triads. After visiting Salvatore's mansion, the Don asks Toni to collect a large sum of money from one of his warehouses downtown. Collecting the cash should be easy but unfortunately the Triads have gotten there first. You may recognise the warehouse in this mission as the Triad fish factory from *GTA III*.

As you near the warehouse a cinematic cut-scene kicks in where a series of bombs go off and a van is hurled into the screen, narrowly missing Toni.

Toni's mission evolves on the fly to present him with a few new objectives. He must now navigate his way through the burning factory, shooting any Triads that get in his way and avoiding getting barbecued in the process.

Once enough cash has been collected it's time to leg it back to the mansion. Unfortunately the Triads giving chase in fish trucks managed to knock Toni off the road and force him to switch vehicles. Now on a motorcycle, Toni takes advantage of the Vice City ability to fire an Uzi forward to unleash a hail of bullets into a nearby Triad truck. After leaving the smoking trucks behind him, Toni busts out a wheelie before blasting

back through Portland to Salvatore's mansion with the cash. That's how we roll!

Casino mission

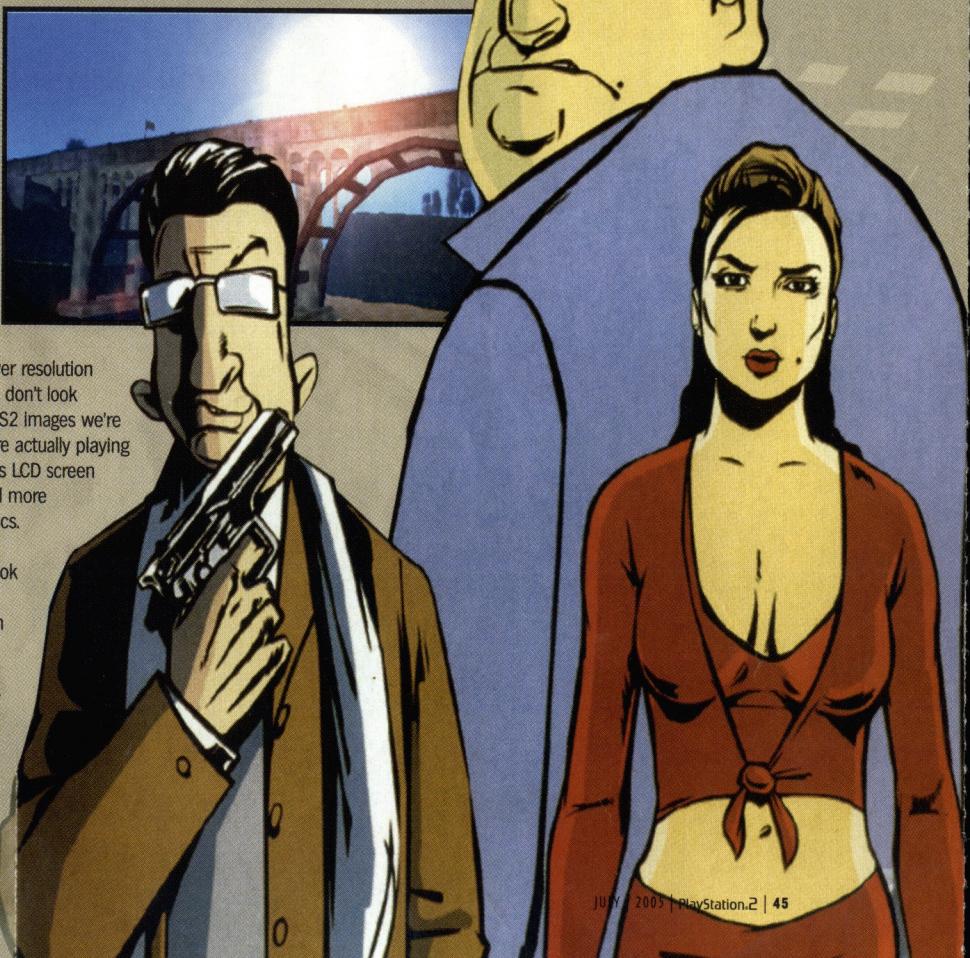
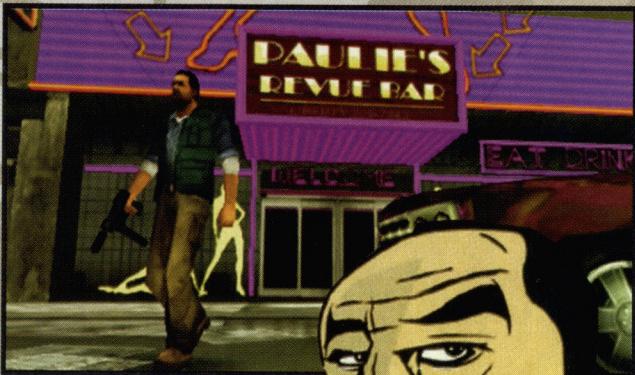
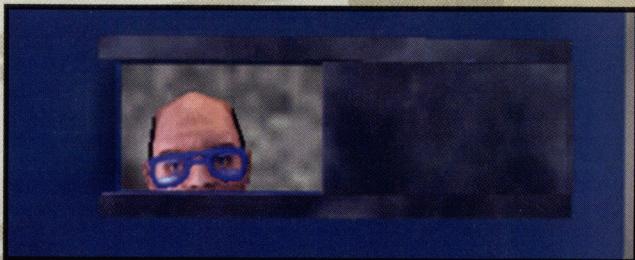
Taking place quite early in the game, this mission sees Toni proving his worth to the Leone family. The first objective is to head down to the red light district and scrounge around for info. It's here that we see the first of many slight changes present in *Liberty City Stories* as a result of the earlier time period. The strip club that was Luigi's Sex Club Seven in *GTA III* is currently Paulie's Revue Bar, an even dodgier dive owned by a pervert by the name of JD O'Tool.

JD currently works for the Sindacco family but he wants to defect to the Leone family so he's offering info. You might remember the Sindaccos as the rival family fighting Salvatore for control of the casino in *GTA San Andreas*. JD tells Toni that a Leone casino in Saint Mark's is about to be attacked by the Sindaccos. After heading into a nearby Ammunition to tool up, Toni heads to the casino.

The first problem Toni has to deal with is a wave of Sindacco vehicles heading his way. By demonstrating some nifty drive-by skills, Toni is able to take down the first wave. One of the vehicles in the second wave manages to get through Toni's defences and hit the casino with a bomb, damaging but not destroying it.

The bad news is the Sindaccos take it up a notch by sending the next bomb in a bulletproof Patriot. Tony must ram it off the road and execute the driver before it gets to the casino. Still not giving up, the Sindaccos send a truck packed full of explosives straight at the casino. The bomb is set to go off in ten seconds. Toni's only chance is to jump

in the truck and hope he can drive it a safe distance away before the bomb goes off. With one second left on the clock, Toni dives out of the vehicle just before it explodes. Intense is an understatement. That's just one of the first missions, so you can imagine how crazy *Liberty City Stories* is going to get once you get into the thick of it!



but other members of the Leone family, like Maria, Luigi and Joey are pretty safe bets too.

Although *Liberty City Stories* is set in the same location as *GTA III*, Rockstar was keen to point out that it will offer players a brand new story and introduce never before seen characters. Ensuring that the scripting and plot-twists for *Liberty City Stories*' new adventure maintains the same high production values was essential for Rockstar. This *Liberty City* adventure takes advantage of the studio's experience on *Vice City* and *San Andreas* to offer up an experience that exceeds *GTA III* in every way.

In the palm of your hand

There's no question that visually *Liberty City Stories* outshines its three PS2 siblings.

On paper the PSP's lower resolution means the screenshots don't look quite as sharp as the PS2 images we're used to, but when you're actually playing it on the PSP's gorgeous LCD screen the effect is crisper and more vibrant than PS2 graphics. When you stand on the edge of Portland and look out across the water to the skyscrapers of Staunton Island, the effect of seeing the entire cityscape of Liberty City in the palm of your hand is nothing short of amazing. On top of the gob-smacking effect of just seeing

grand theft auto

Liberty City Stories



GTA running perfectly on the PSP, Liberty City Stories actually manages to improve on the graphics engine used in *GTAIII* in many ways.

The first thing you'll notice is that the model for Toni Cipriani is much more detailed than *GTAIII*'s unnamed anti-hero. Toni's textures are impressive enough to show subtle things like his 5 o'clock shadow and the stumps that *GTAIII* characters had for hands have

been replaced with fully articulated fingers. Cars have also received a tune up, with superior environmental reflections and particle effects for exhaust and tyre smoke.

Game on

It was always gameplay much more than graphics that made the GTA games such a huge phenomenon, so it's great to see that this department has received

even more attention than the visuals. Rockstar's main aim when approaching the project was to deliver the same quality on PSP that people experienced when they played through *GTAIII* on PS2. This may not sound like a tough task, but when you take into account that the PSP's UMD discs only hold a third as much data as DVDs, and that the PSP is capable of roughly 90% as much 3D power as the PS2, the scope of Rockstar's task becomes apparent.

As enjoyable as *GTAIII* was, in comparison to Vice City and San Andreas, its missions were fairly basic. Other than a few brilliant exceptions, the bulk of missions involved simply wasting a few targets (either on-foot or in cars) or getting your car safely to a destination before a tight time limit or some pursuing cars could bring you down. The two Liberty City Stories missions we saw were multi-tiered epics that continually cranked the tension and the difficulty of the objectives up and up. You'll find yourself constantly off balance, fighting desperately to stay alive – and loving every minute of it! Check out the 'Mission Impossible' section for

detailed mission breakdowns.

After seeing Liberty City Stories up and running on PSP, we're pleased to tell you that Rockstar has managed to recreate every aspect of *GTAIII*'s near-limitless playground. Rather than pat itself on the back and ship the game, Rockstar decided that this achievement wasn't enough. It wanted to cram as much of the gameplay innovations introduced in Vice City and San Andreas into the Liberty City Stories experience. If you're a little rusty on *GTAIII* and Vice City and aren't sure which game introduced planes and which one gave us chainsaws, take a quick look at our 'A Tale of Two Cities and a State' boxout to get yourself up to speed.

On top of all of the vehicles, bonus missions, weapons and other features of *GTAIII*, Rockstar has already managed to include a few of the more recent GTA ingredients in the Liberty City Stories adventure. Vice City gameplay innovations that have so far been incorporated include crippling cars by targeting and shooting out tyres – this means that police using roadspikes to stop you is also highly likely. The ability to bail out of a car while it's still moving is also confirmed. We were stoked to discover that Vice City's most popular addition – motorcycles – is alive and kicking in Liberty City Stories. We've seen three different sorts of motorcycles in the game so far and we can't wait to take them for a test-drive. Now we'll finally be able to hold a wheelie from one side of the Portland-Staunton bridge to the other!

Arguably the weakest element of *GTAIII* was the shooting and targeting system. To remedy this, Rockstar has implemented a targeting system that's even more advanced than the one used in Vice City. No longer will you have to walk the streets of Liberty City in fear of dying at the hands of some Uzi-wielding thug while the targeting system locks uselessly onto some granny on the





other side of the street. Hurrah!

After looking closely at the PSP's screen it was also possible to pick up that the game's HUD and map are now semi-transparent. It's not a huge feature but it does increase your visibility and is a PSP-specific feature that was not even present in *San Andreas*. This is a good sign of Rockstar's commitment to really push the envelope when it comes to squeezing in every feature possible into the portable game. Whether we'll see some of the crazier GTA vehicles like fighter jets or two-player rampages via the PSP's Wi-Fi remains to be seen, but even if Rockstar left the feature list as it is, *Liberty City Stories* would already be a strong contender for PSP game of the year.

Metal Gear Solid creator Hideo Kojima made a point of saying that he didn't think the PSP's controls were precise enough to do justice to an action-based MGS title (hence his decision to make *Metal Gear Acid* a strategy game). Luckily Kojima's view is not shared by Rockstar (or anyone else that we've spoken to about it). With the PSP only having one analogue stick compared to the Dual Shock's two, the ability to rotate the camera while running has been lost, but other than that *Liberty City Stories* controls just as intuitively as any previous GTA game.

With the news that Rockstar hopes to release *Liberty City Stories* as early as September our anticipation kicked into overdrive. What better way could there be to kick off the launch of the PSP than having a shiny new GTA game for its release? The only other things we can think of would get us arrested, so we're quite happy to hold out for *Liberty City Stories*. Expect to see a lot more on this one. ☺



A Tale of Two Cities and a State

Judging by the sales figures, most of the western world has played all three PS2 *Grand Theft Auto* games, but for those of you who got into the game late we've broken down a list of the biggest features in each game. Next to each feature we've also jotted down how likely we think it is to appear in *Liberty City Stories*.



Grand Theft Auto III

- Large range of road vehicles from compacts to trucks (confirmed)
- Small plane (confirmed)
- Tanks (confirmed)
- Boats (confirmed)
- Weapons ranging from baseball bats to rocket launchers (confirmed)
- Ability to shoot Uzis out windows at cars and people (confirmed)
- Punching and kicking attacks (confirmed)
- Six star police wanted level that saw police chase you in cars, vans and choppers (confirmed)
- Rampage missions (confirmed)
- Insane jumps (confirmed)
- Hidden packages (confirmed)



Grand Theft Auto Vice City

- Riding motorcycles (confirmed)
- Flying helicopters (very likely)
- Fully functional seaplane (unlikely)
- Improved targeting system (confirmed)
- New weapons like chainsaws, samurai swords and chainguns (likely)
- Shooting out tyres (confirmed)
- Bailing out of moving cars (confirmed)
- Ability to change clothing (confirmed)
- Robbing stores (probably not)
- Property missions (not likely)



Grand Theft Auto San Andreas

- Parachutes (this should be easy so there's a good chance)
- Swimming (quite likely)
- Climbing (quite likely)
- Fighter jets (probably not)
- Jetpack (we sure hope so)
- Bicycles (unlikely)
- Hovercraft (unlikely)
- Go-Karts (unlikely)
- Robbing houses (highly unlikely)
- Driving trains (highly unlikely)
- Girlfriends (probably not)
- Customising appearance (highly unlikely)
- Eating food and exercising (not a chance)
- Two-player mode (probably not, but a Wi-Fi mode would be incredible)

liberty city: comeback tour

With the PSP game taking place in the very same Liberty City as *GTAIII* we thought it'd be useful to dig out our copy of the game and take a look at the city's map. Be aware that as this is a *GTAIII* map, and *Liberty City Stories* takes place three years earlier, there are bound to be some slight changes to business names and the like in the prequel. The screens below are also from *GTAIII* but they still give you a good idea of the visual style of the three islands that will form the basis of your new playground.

Shoreside Vale

This was the last island that you gained access to in *GTAIII*. It was host to the Liberty City airport. Although the doors on most of the planes and helicopters were permanently locked, there was one small plane (Dodo) that you could fly if you had the patience to master its very tough controls. The difficulty with it was that it had essentially had both of its wings cut off and wasn't supposed to fly (hence the name, Dodo). *GTAIII* came out in October 2001, very soon after the 9/11 World Trade Center disaster. It's rumoured that Rockstar crippled the game's plane to avoid the potential for negative press that there would have been if players could freely fly planes into the city's skyscrapers.

As well as the airport, Shoreside Vale also had a large dam, a small industrial area and one of the more sizeable residential areas, with some of the city's rare mansions.



Mysterious new land mass

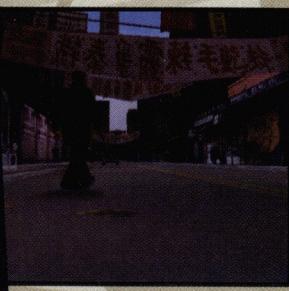
When *Liberty City Stories* was paused briefly we got a chance to take a look at the map of the city. The same three sections of the city (Portland, Staunton Island and Shoreside Vale) were all where they should be. However, rather than being a self-contained island, the PSP map showed Shoreside Vale to be nearly twice as big as it did in *GTA III*, with a whole new section of land lying above the other two islands. Predictably Rockstar would not comment on this (and we got the feeling they wish we hadn't noticed) but it hints very strongly at *Liberty City Stories* featuring an environment that expands on the city we knew in *GTA III*.



Portland

This is where it all started. Before we were introduced to *GTA III*'s Portland we thought all 3D adventures had to be linear action games or dull RPG epics. Portland was our first taste of a living, breathing 3D world that was actually fun to explore. Citizens muttered crazy comments to themselves and each building was dotted with hilarious billboards and fun little secrets.

Famous locations of Portland include Salvatore Leone's mansion (north-east corner of the map), a huge docks area (complete with tanker ships you could explore) and, of course, the Triad fish factory.



The early missions we saw of *Liberty City Stories* gave us the chance to return to both Salvatore's mansion and the fish factory and relive our fond memories. Good times... good times...



Staunton Island

Liberty City's business district was the second location you visited in *GTA III*. It had plenty of towering skyscrapers, a huge central park, a sports stadium, a casino, construction yards and even a military base.

Staunton was a huge sprawling district that was arguably the most diverse of the three Liberty City Islands. It was also famous for introducing us to Donald Love and Phil Cassidy, both of whom appeared in *GTA Vice City*. Donald was a business tycoon who gave you various missions across Staunton Island, all of which were aimed at increasing his monopoly of the city's crime scene. Phil was introduced in *GTA III* as a Vietnam vet who supposedly lost his arm in the war. However, while playing *Vice City* you meet a younger Phil and find out how it really happened. Will both Phil and Donald appear in *Liberty City Stories*? We sure hope so.





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TM

Liberty City Stories

WORDS: TRISTAN OGILVIE

CALIFORNIA DREAMING

The Birdman is set to reach his True Prime in the Streets of LA...

The sport of skateboarding owes a great deal of gratitude to the dedicated development team at California-based Neversoft. Prior to the late '90s release of the original *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* on PSOne, skateboards were widely perceived as the childish hobbies of sun bleached youths with names like 'Chad' or 'Sascha', or the flimsy wooden means to a testicle-crushing end in numerous winning entries on Australia's *Funniest Home Videos* (insert comical 'BOING!' sound effect and canned laughter track). Prior to THPS's release the sport had been gathering momentum thanks to exposure in North America on cable sports channel ESPN, but Neversoft

helped deliver it to the world and transform skateboarding into a multi-million dollar worldwide industry, a gnarly new focal point for a new youth culture, and a firm number one on the list of things to terrify your mother with (just ahead of sky diving, playing rugby

league and the phrase "Mum, Kris and I are more than just roommates").

The sport's appeal is largely thanks to the adrenalin-fuelled danger involved and the occasional illegality of the endeavour itself, but what really sold the videogame to the masses was an undeniably brilliant skating engine, ingenious level design and an addictive objective-based style of gameplay. This effectively made it attractive to both skating wannabes who valued the skin on their elbows enough not to try the real thing and casual gamers looking for a combo-based pick-up-and-play experience with lasting depth in the long term. Mixed in with some iconic secret characters (see 'Secret Skaters'), served up with a fully licensed rock and hip hop soundtrack and The Birdman along with the sport he helped define took flight in the eyes of the global mainstream.

BURIED UNDERGROUND

The fifth installment in the series, *Tony Hawk's Underground*, maintained the skating gameplay excellence from its predecessors, but alienated some of its long term followers by slightly shifting the focus away from the core skating mechanic and adding in extra vehicles and seemingly superfluous 'off the board' tasks. These extras were even harder to bear in 2004's follow up, *Tony Hawk's Underground 2*, which centred far too much of the attention on the *Jackass*-style antics of Bam Margera and less on the legendary skills of Tony Hawk himself.

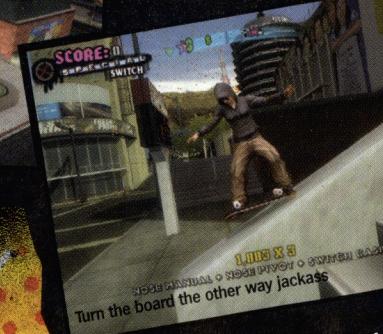
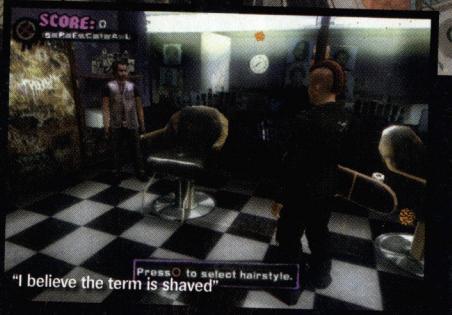
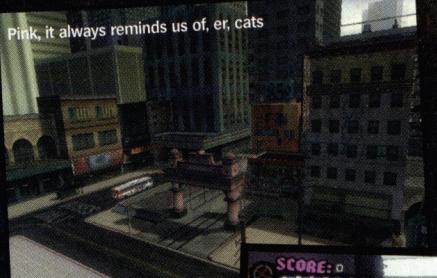
"We received a great response to *THUG2*,

and commercially the game still did very well," explains Kevin Mulhall, Executive Producer on the *Tony Hawk* series. "But our goal with *Tony Hawk's American Wasteland* was to produce and present an entirely new gameplay experience to fans of the series as well as welcome new players. This isn't a continuation to the *THUG2* story, nor is it a continuation to the *Underground* series."

Tony Hawk's American Wasteland, the seventh edition in the series, is absolutely huge. For the first time in the series, or in any extreme sports game for that matter, players will be able to skate in a full scale city with seemingly endless skating lines trailing off into the horizon and in all directions. And it's not just any city we're talking about either; it's Los Angeles, arguably the skateboarding capital of the world. Conceivably you'll be able to ollie, kickflip and grind your way from the hills of Hollywood to the tops of the skyscrapers in the Downtown area and down to the beach alongside the Santa Monica Pier.

"THAW gives the freedom to the player to continuously skate from one end of Los Angeles to the other, without any interruptions or annoying loading screens," continues Mulhall. "We are immersing the player in Los Angeles. You can do anything and everything you need to within the city. You can locate shops that will provide you with the option to change your hairstyle, buy new clothes or get a





tattoo. You can even learn graffiti skills from locals and instantly upgrade your graffiti tag to fit the local vibe".

DECKS, EFFECTS AND BMX

So it sounds like the development team shares our appreciation of Rockstar's epic love letter to the state of California, *GTA San Andreas*, at least in terms of character customisation. But don't worry, you won't be avenging the death of your mother or pimping out prostitutes, *THAW* is still first and foremost concerned with seeking out the coolest vertical leaps, death defying grinds and stylish blunt slides possible throughout a variety of urban locations, with much better controls and a longer moves list than ever before.

"There are a tonne of new skate tricks, including the bert slides [the practice of sliding on the wheels of the board, usually on banks or transitions] from back in the Dogtown days, lip and rail stalls, vert wall plants, bank drops [similar to acid drops, but can be performed on any bank] and many others," says Mulhall.

"Then there's the BMX bike which is a brand new addition this year. It's totally full-featured; with a complete bike trick set and original controls. The BMX utilises all of the same skate lines throughout the city, so the player has a choice of transportation around the city".

Yes, you read that right. The BMX that was so fun (albeit cumbersome during a car chase) in *San Andreas* is set to also feature in *THAW* but with controls, physics and trick capabilities equivalent to the same high standard of the skating – so you won't be restricted to mere bunny-hops and wheelies, you'll have full freedom to pull off difficult grinds, stalls and classic moves such as the 'Superman' and 'Table Top' all over the streets of the City of Angels.

But Neversoft is drawing the line at boards and bikes in *THAW*; the 'novelty' vehicles from the *Underground* series have been ditched in favour of a strict focus on quality, not quantity. Consequently the BMX is by no means a half-hearted distraction, and indeed you can ride it throughout the entire game if you want to. We're not sure if this means that there will be professional BMX riders on the character roster, but we do know there will be skate-specific and bike-specific tasks.

"There are no other vehicles that you control in *American Wasteland*," explains Mulhall. "We wanted to focus our control efforts for this title, and we did so by expanding on our skate controls, off-the-board controls, and the addition of the full-trick set of the BMX bike".

KNOW YOUR ROOTS

THAW is set to feature a story packed with more twists in the plot than a copy of *The Da Vinci*

Code printed on the sides of a Rubik's Cube, and one that will pay homage to the roots of skateboarding and '80s punk style. Gamers will play a young rebel skater who makes his way to the Mecca of skateboarding where he must prove himself to Tony Hawk, local pros, and legendary skaters. Eventually you must participate in the construction of the ultimate, trick-filled skate park; so it seems that the park creator that has been a mainstay of the series has been further integrated into the story mode itself.

"The story mode in *THAW* will feature all new missions, most of them multi-part missions that will be bigger and more involved than any objective you have ever had to do in a Hawk game," says Mulhall. "Most of these missions will integrate into the story as you progress. In classic mode, all of the goals will be very traditional like the ones from the original *Pro Skater* titles".

Rather than base the classic mode around selected locations within the story mode's sprawling LA environment, Neversoft is instead allowing fans to relive expanded and renovated versions of popular levels from previous games in the series. But what could they be? The Foundry level from *THPS3*? The classic Miami school level from the original? Sadly, Mulhall remains tight lipped on the topic – he wouldn't give us his after hours phone number either (sometimes we can't sleep and just need to talk).

We do know for a fact that the career

SECRET SKATERS

The Tony Hawk series is well known for its unlockable cameo characters, and *American Wasteland* will no doubt feature several recognisable faces. Here's our top five from the previous outings:

1. Spider-Man (THPS)

His web-slinging capabilities add breathtaking new dimensions to basic grabs and kick flips, but mistime a rail slide and you'll find more than just your Spidey Sense tingling.



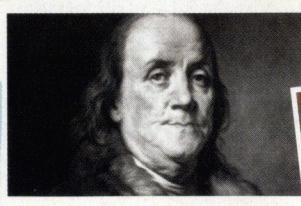
2. Darth Maul (THPS3)

He's easily the best character to come out of the *Star Wars* prequels, the Yin to Jar-Jar Binks' painful Yang if you will. His cart wheeling fighting style translates well to his skating, and don't underestimate the power of his Dark Slide.



3. Benjamin Franklin (THUG2)

How does a famous Inventor from the 18th century connect with the kids of today? It doesn't hurt to have your face on the American \$100 bill, for starters. That dude is so money!



4. Daisy (THPS4)

Not the most remarkable character, but her voice was provided by well endowed 'adult film' star Jenna Jameson (who also voiced Candy Suxx in *GTA Vice City*). We've heard she likes a bit of bump with her grinds, and her signature move is the lip slide.



5. Gene Simmons (THUG)

The infamous bass player from rock group KISS could practically bolt some wheels onto his plank-sized tongue and skate on that. What? We feel that body piercing has become a bit too safe these days, that's all.



TRICKTIONARY

If you thought that a McTwist was the latest addition to the salad menu at Macca's, perhaps you should take a look at this brief guide to skating for beginners. And would it kill you to pick up some fries for us next time?

OLIE

The Ollie is perhaps the most crucial trick in modern skateboarding, and involves leaping into the air with the skateboard staying flush with your feet. It was invented

in 1978 by Alan Ollie Gelfand, so it's lucky it's not called the 'Alan'.

POP SHOVE-IT

It's kind of like an ollie, except you whip the board around 180 degrees with your back foot. "Pop? Shove it!" was also Luke's original response to Vader's "I am your father" in the first draft of *The Empire Strikes Back*. Don't say we never watch the special features!

MELON GRAB

This is an aerial move where the skater grabs his board between his heels with his front hand and then extends his legs forwards. The Melon Grab is also sometimes referred to as 'That's inappropriate, Sir. You have been warned' by the bouncers at our local Hooters restaurant.

IMPOSSIBLE

Another aerial move where the board itself performs a complete backflip. Sounds impossible, right? Just like the chances of *The X Factor* returning for a second series. Whammy!

MANUAL

This is a wheelie, on either the front or back wheels, performed immediately after a trick that involves an aerial like the Melon Grab we've just discussed. Unlike the one that came with your VCR, you don't need to know Vietnamese to understand the damn thing.

mode will be fully playable online for two players, so you'll be able to work co-operatively with a friend through the objectives. Other existing multiplayer modes such as Trick Attack, Scavenger Hunt and Slap! will be returning for both online and offline play, and EyeToy support for capturing an image of your face for your create-a-skater is also confirmed.

The off-the-board feature that was debuted in the first *Underground* game also remains, but fortunately the slightly awkward controls have been overhauled and thanks to the higher level of environmental interaction, you actually have good reasons to get off it in the first place.

"The off-the-board controls have totally been revamped and improved this time around, and we have added additional controls including wall runs, wall flips, and rolls," explains Mulhall. "You can also take your board and throw it across the street if you want. There are always specific areas in the cities that you can get to while walking, that might be more difficult to find if you never get off your board".

Oh yeah, lots of places to bump and grind



CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
Neversoft knows a lot about skating, but it doesn't create the games without help. Each game in the series has become more and more reliant on the advice offered by its ever-popular namesake.

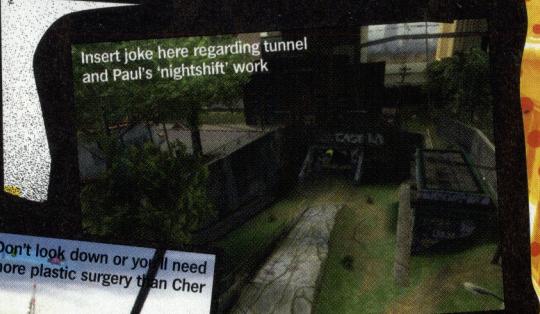
"Tony has always been very close to the development process," says Mulhall. "We run initial game ideas by him to make sure we're on the right track, and he'll provide feedback to us on all the latest tricks, up-and-coming pro skaters, etc. We send him builds throughout the project so that he can track the development, and he gives us feedback as features are implemented."

It's certainly a partnership that is yet to fail – the *Tony Hawk* series has collectively shipped over 25 million units worldwide to date – and the franchise shows no signs of slipping awkwardly mid-grind and painfully wrapping its groin around a hand rail.

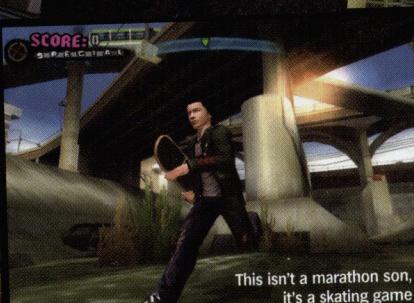
Especially with the upcoming *THAW* looking to push the limits of skating freedom even further. "THAW is an entirely new experience for Hawk fans," concludes Mulhall. "This game will change the way people perceive a Tony Hawk game, or any extreme sports game for that matter".

It's hard to argue with him; with *THAW*'s expansive LA-based environment there'll be no restrictive invisible walls impeding your creativity or repetitive skating lines to force your fun into a jarring face plant. The City of Angels is shaping up to provide a limitless playground for skaters – it's the ultimate boarding without borders.

Insert joke here regarding tunnel and Paul's 'nightshift' work



This isn't a marathon son, it's a skating game



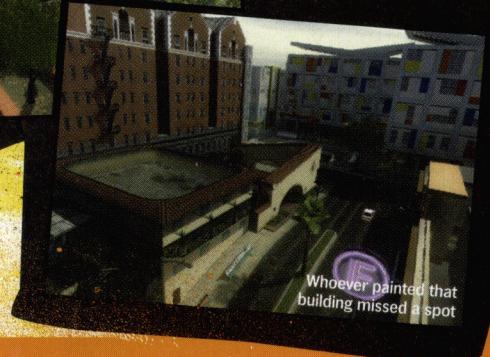
We love skating in bush



How about trying a move for that my sister can't do



Whoever painted that building missed a spot



Learning, even for out for their first experience for 30 odd.

KICKFLIP + ONE WHEELIE NOSE MANUAL + POP-UP
MANUAL + SWING FLIP BACKFLIP + SWING FLIP



Sony's PlayStation 3 firmly dislocated every jaw in the tightly packed auditorium when it was revealed at the 2005 Electronic Entertainment Expo. Even the most cynical journalists found themselves cheering like rowdy sports fans at the PS3's dazzling display of limitless gaming grunt.

Le'ts jump right into the important stuff. The PS3 has 35 times the processing power of our trusty PS2. That's some pretty serious grunt right there. The biggest jaw-dropper though, was the news that the PS3's custom-designed Cell processor makes it twice as powerful as Microsoft's recently announced Xbox 360 console! Ouch! We wish we could have seen the look on the Microsoft boys' faces when that bombshell was dropped. It's back to the drawing board for their techies.

The PS3's Cell chip packs 300 million transistors and is a ridiculously sophisticated piece of technology.

What this means when you're playing games is that you'll be dropped into a world of movie-quality graphics that'll be running at the super high resolution of 1080p (more than eight times the resolution of current TV, DVDs and PS2 games).

Sony had some very specific goals in mind when it commissioned NVIDIA to create the PS3's Graphics Processing Unit (GPU – or the Cell's paintbrush if you prefer). Sony asked NVIDIA to create the world's most advanced GPU and to deliver

movie-quality visuals in real-time. To demonstrate how well the PS3 has delivered on its movie-quality graphics, Sony showed us a real-time recreation of *Spider-Man 2's* Alfred Molina (Doc Ock). The recreation was unnervingly photo-realistic (even on the cinema sized screen Sony was demonstrating it on). To really hammer the effect home, the demo threw the digital Molina into a number of different locations (from dimly lit rooms to bright forest scenes). The shadows, lighting and the resulting flesh tones all reacted perfectly (even being detailed enough to show a slight reddish transparency through the skin on Molina's ears when the sun was behind him). Arguably the most impressive part of the demo was the fact that all of these lighting effects were being created on the fly by the hardware and will need no software programming from developers to create in-game. The banks of super computers used to create the special effects in movies like *Episode III* and *Lord of the Rings* have a combined computing power of 10 Teraflops. And, no, before you ask, a 'Teraflop' is not what happens to your Johnson when you realise on your wedding night that you've married a man. Oddly enough, the people organising the press conference told us not to ask anymore questions after that one.



A DECADE OF PLAYSTATION

Our trusty old PlayStation has come a long way in the last 10 years. The original PlayStation introduced us to the world of 3D graphics. The PlayStation 2 used its Emotion Engine to create believable 3D characters. PlayStation 3 will bring us into the HD era with photo-realistic gaming.

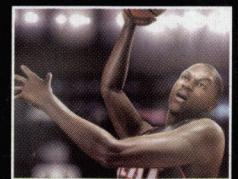
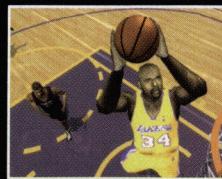
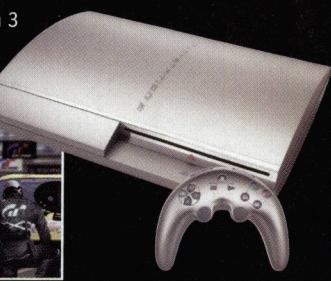
1995 – Playstation
Real-time 3D
CD



2000 – PlayStation 2
Emotion Engine
DVD



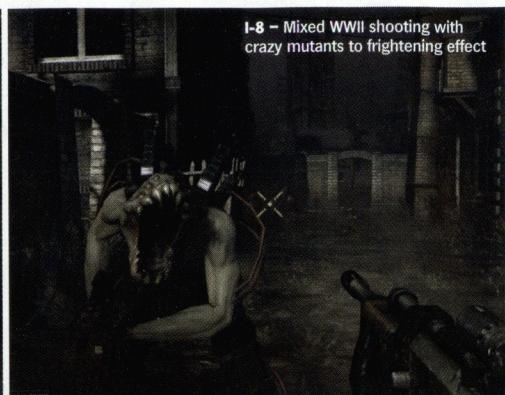
2006 – PlayStation 3
Cell
Blu-ray



FIGHT NIGHT 3 – Holy crap on a stick if those graphics don't smack you in the face harder than a Mike Tyson hook!



I-8 – Mixed WWII shooting with crazy mutants to frightening effect



NI-OH – It's being made by Koei (Kessen). The only thing sharper than its graphics are its swords!

Apparently a Teraflop is a measure of graphical processing power. The PS3 is capable of an astounding two Teraflops (the Xbox 360 can only compute one Teraflop). Are you seeing a pattern here? This hefty graphics power allows the PS3 to create visuals that are on-par with the effects we're used to from big budget Hollywood blockbusters.

Of course, if you feel like watching rather than playing a Hollywood blockbuster, the PS3 naturally comes with DVD playback functionality. In fact, it also supports high definition Blu-ray discs (the future of DVD). As well as being able to play HD movies, Blu-ray discs hold six times as much data as a DVDs, which will come in handy for the huge new PS3 games.

Swiss Army Console

It's not all about amazing graphics though. The PS3 also introduces a range of new features that allow you to enjoy games on a whole new level. The PS3's most unexpected new feature is the ability to run on two TVs simultaneously. And, yes, it can run them both at 1080p (if you're rich enough to own two HD TVs). You don't need to be a millionaire to enjoy the PS3 though. The games will still look incredible, even on that \$149 TV you bought from Dick Smith.

Why would you want to run two TVs at once? There are many more practical uses for this feature than you would imagine. First off, you have the option to sit two TVs side-by-side for a super-wide cinematic view (that's 32:9 for the techies). You can also use one TV for your main game, while the second displays additional gaming information

like maps, stats, video-cam feeds of your opponents or even your favourite internet site (ours is www.orangutanfightclub.com if you're interested).

By far the most exciting option for the two screens is using them as separate views for multiplayer gaming. Imagine loading up a two-player game on PS3 and being able to have a screen each? That is cool! Even better, you could use split-screen views to have up to eight of you playing across the two TVs with a quarter screen each – all off the one PS3! That's how we roll!

You don't have to start looking around for things to sell on ebay so you can save up the cash for two

INSIDE PANDORA'S BOX

Below are the specs for the PS3. For those who don't know a Teraflop from a bellyflop take a look at our translations so you know just how awesome the PS3 is going to be.

CPU (Cell Processor)

- PowerPC-base Core @3.2GHz
- 1 VMX vector unit per core
- 512KB L2 cache
- 7 x SPE @3.2GHz
- 7 x 128b 128 SIMD GPRs
- 7 x 256KB SRAM for SPE * 1 of 8 SPEs

The most powerful CPU on the planet!

GPU (RSX @ 550MHz)

- 1.8 TFLOPS floating point performance
- Full HD (up to 1080p) x 2 channels

The most awesome graphics card in the universe – better than the ones they have on Mercury.

Sound

- Dolby 5.1ch, DTS, LPCM, etc.

The PS3 can handle hundreds of thousands of sound channels with ease.

Memory

- 256MB XDR Main RAM @3.2GHz
- 256MB GDDR3 VRAM @700MHz

That's fast. Real fast.

System Bandwidth

- Main RAM 25.6GB/s
- VRAM 22.4GB/s
- RSX 20GB/s (write) + 15GB/s (read)
- SB 2.5GB/s (write) + 2.5GB/s (read)

Woah! That's nice.

System Floating Point Performance

- 2 TFLOPS

That's awesome!

Storage

- HDD Detachable 2.5" HDD slot x 1

Bring those portable hard drives on!

Controller

- Bluetooth (up to 7)
- USB2.0 (wired)
- Wi-Fi (PSP®)
- Network (over IP)

You can play with seven mates on wireless controllers. That's damn impressive.

AV Output

- Screen size 480i, 480p, 720p, 1080i, 1080p
- HDMI x 2, Analog AV MULTI OUT x 1,
- Digital audio DIGITAL OUT (OPTICAL) x 1

Your PS3 can play on two TV screens at the same time. Whammy!

Disc media

- CD (PlayStation®, PlayStation® 2, CD-DA, CD-R, CD-RW, SACD, DualDisc)
- DVD (PlayStation® 2, PlayStation® 3)
- Blu-ray Disc (PlayStation® 3, BD-Rom)

Backward compatibility on ALL games, not just the most popular ones (how do you like them apples? Game over Mr Gates!)



Multi-taps either. PS3 supports up to eight controllers without the need for any additional hardware. Bluetooth technology is used to power up to seven of the PS3's controllers wirelessly, so you no longer have to tangle your mates up in cords during multiplayer sessions (unless that's what you're into). And when you want an eighth controller it can easily be plugged in old school.

You don't need to worry about buying batteries for your stylish new controllers either. You can get 24 hours of play out of them (with full rumble) before they need to be recharged. When they do get low on batteries you will see a warning light. By plugging the controller in via one of the PS3's USB sockets you can charge your controller back up while you continue to play your game.

As well as Bluetooth, the PS3 also has built-in broadband and Wi-Fi support. Using a mixture of these connections the PS3 can interface wirelessly with PSPs, PCs, the Internet and, of course, other PS3s. As well as game content, you will be able to download music, pictures and movies from the Internet or your PC, play around with them on your PS3 (possibly on a second TV while you play games on the main one) then transfer any of the files to your PSP or a friend's PS3. What's really boggling is that your PSP can access, browse and download content off your PS3, even if you and your PSP are in a completely different country. Imagine being on holiday in Hawaii when your beach plans get axed thanks to a surprise

rainstorm. No problem, just download a few fresh movies or games from your PS3 back in Australia and kill some time while you wait for the rain to clear. This same technology works with the PS3's new high definition EyeToy. The new EyeToy will be able to connect to yours and other PS3s in different countries (all wirelessly). Not that you'd want to be using it on the rainy afternoon in Hawaii, but when you do see something overseas that you want to share with your friends and family, all they need to do is log their PS3s into your EyeToy and they can watch a real-time video feed of whatever you point your EyeToy at. PS3, is there anything it can't do?

The Game Show

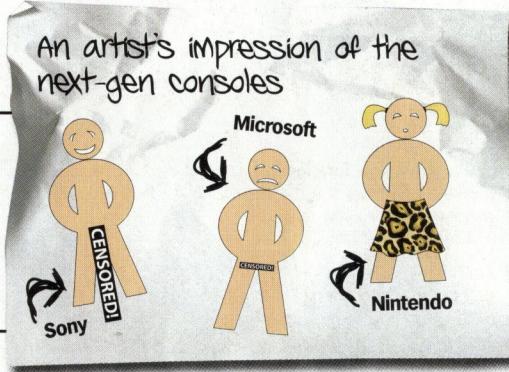
Even though the PS3 has more features than a supercharged Swiss Army Knife, the main focus is clearly gaming. The most talented development teams in the world have already been working in secret for months, and in some cases years, on PS3 games. Sony kicked things off by showing a number of next-generation sequels to our favourite games. Sequels shown included new versions of *Tekken*, *Devil May Cry*, *The Getaway*, *Fight Night*, *Formula One*, *Gran Turismo*, *Killzone*, *Unreal*, *Red Dead Revolver* and *Gundam*. Some games, like the *Devil May Cry* and *Tekken* demos, showed little more than an in-game model going through a few animations, but all of them were

photo-realistic to ridiculous levels (like the way you could see slight distortions in the beads of sweat each time they hit hairs as they rolled down Kazuya's face). The *Killzone* demo was easily the standout of all the sequels revealed. It showed a squad of troops flying into a war-torn city, then taking the enemy on-foot amidst the most intense street combat we've ever seen (and we're including movies too).

A number of brand new franchises were also shown off in the PS3 demos. *Warhawk* is a fighter jet sim throwing more planes around than we saw in the movie *Pearl Harbour*. *Heavenly Sword* starred a sassy red-headed ninja and blew us away with its visceral combat. Ubisoft and Insomnia also showed off frighteningly realistic shooters. The most in-your-face amazing new game again came from one of Sony Europe's studios. *MotorStorm* is being created by the WRC team and showed off cross-country racing with so much mud and car parts flying off in every direction that we could barely keep up. But don't just take our word for how ridiculously impressive the PS3 games are looking, have a skim through our exclusive images of the hottest PS3 games and decide for yourself. Want to hear the best news? You'll be able to buy one of these monster gaming machines as early as March 2006! Damn that's hot!

THE COMPETITION

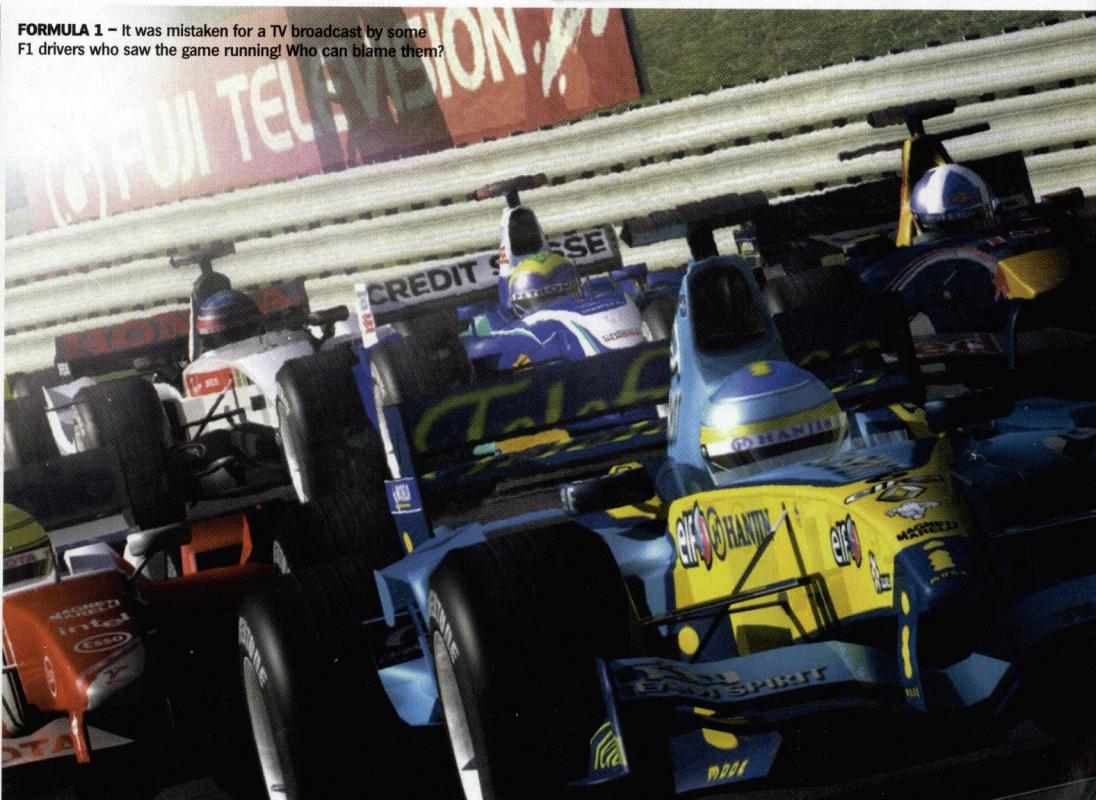
The next-generation battlefield looks like being weighted even more heavily in Sony's favour than the current generation. The Xbox 360's games looked kind of pretty but you really had to look closely to tell the difference between 360 games and regular Xbox games. Nintendo didn't even show off any next generation software, instead relying on a tired batch of Mario games for GameCube and an even smaller GameBoy - woo hoo... Sony tried a slightly different approach and actually showed off the sort of white-hot next-generation games that left everyone screaming for more and counting the minutes until the console's release!



DEVIL MAY CRY 4 - So hot it stung our eyes!

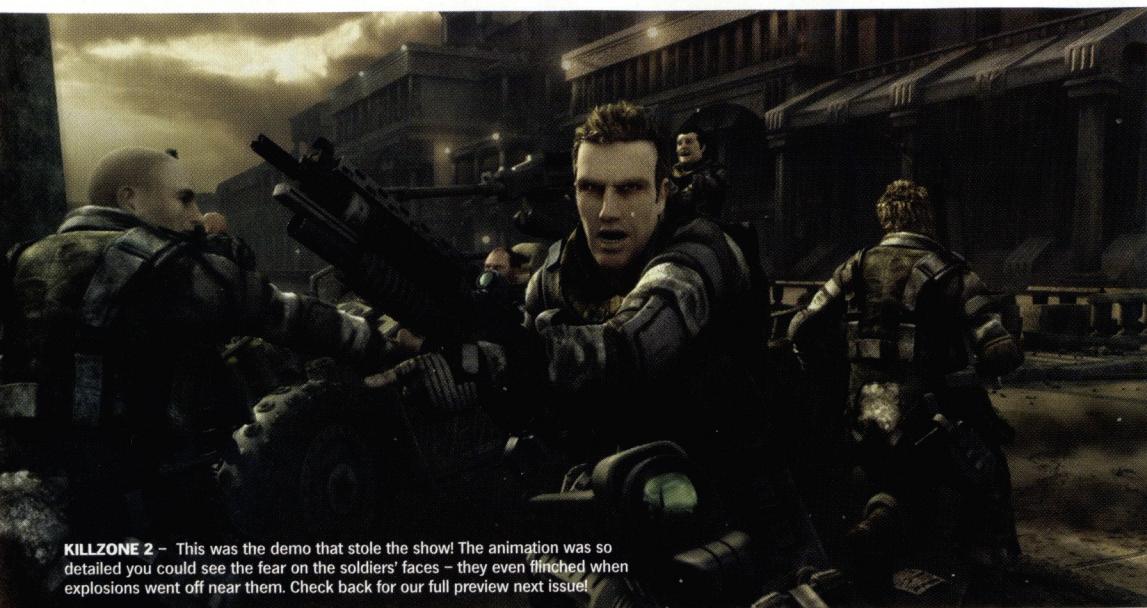


KILLING DAY - Showed an intense Max Payne-style shootout in a hyper-detailed mall

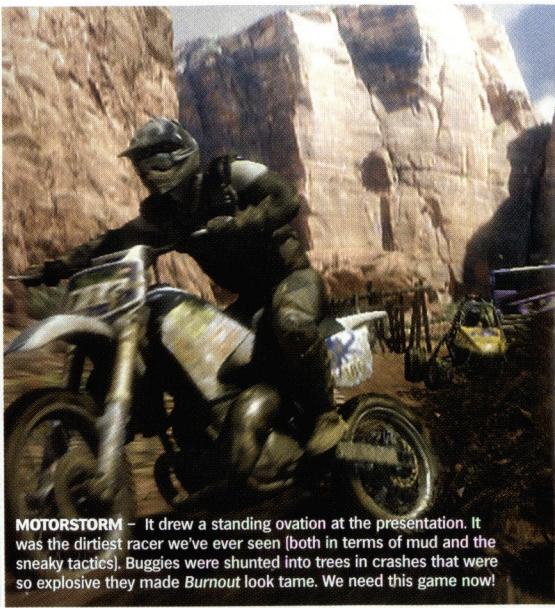


FORMULA 1 - It was mistaken for a TV broadcast by some F1 drivers who saw the game running! Who can blame them?

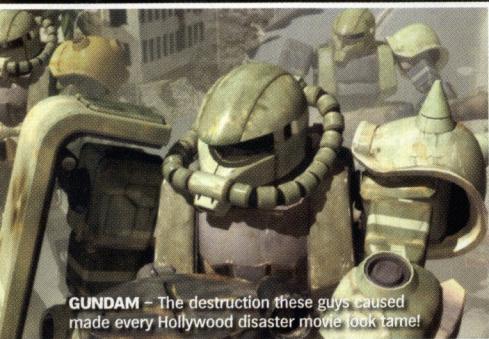
VIRTUAL REALITY



KILLZONE 2 – This was the demo that stole the show! The animation was so detailed you could see the fear on the soldiers' faces – they even flinched when explosions went off near them. Check back for our full preview next issue!



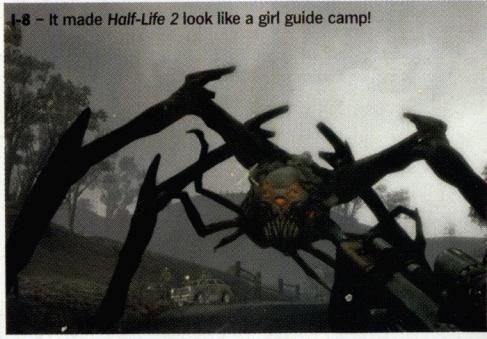
MOTORSTORM – It drew a standing ovation at the presentation. It was the dirtiest racer we've ever seen (both in terms of mud and the sneaky tactics). Buggies were shunted into trees in crashes that were so explosive they made Burnout look tame. We need this game now!



GUNDAM – The destruction these guys caused made every Hollywood disaster movie look tame!



WARHAWK – 2000 futuristic fighter jets on screen? pfft. The PS3 didn't even break a sweat creating this!



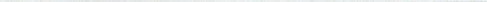
I-8 – It made Half-Life 2 look like a girl guide camp!



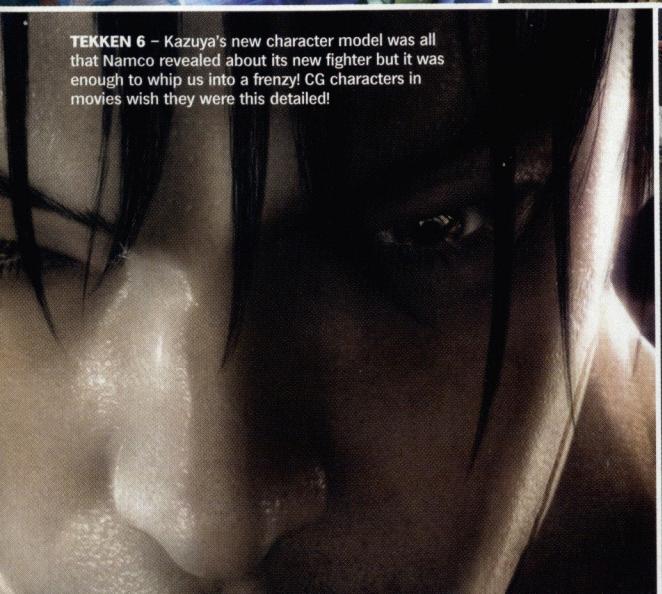
EYIDENTIFY – These babies were showing off 100,000 polygons per boob! Damn, that's hot!



VISION GT – Polyphony's PS3 Gran Turismo game looked unbelievable! Hundreds of flawlessly animated spectators looked on, while camera views panned back to reveal staggeringly detailed scenery stretching off for miles. It's going to be near impossible to keep your eyes off the stunning background and on the road with this jaw-dropper!

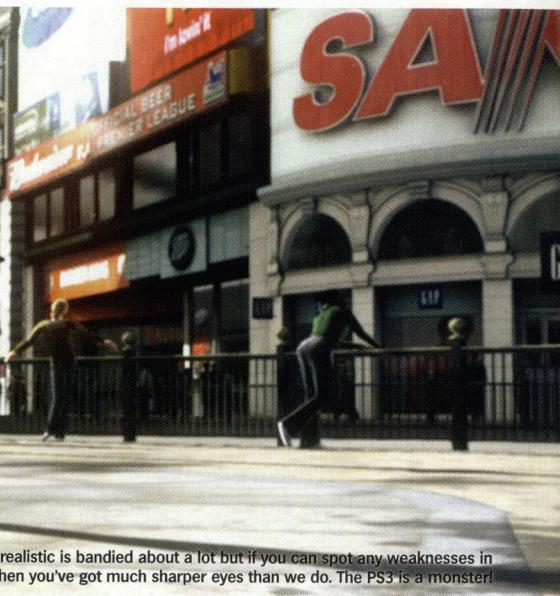
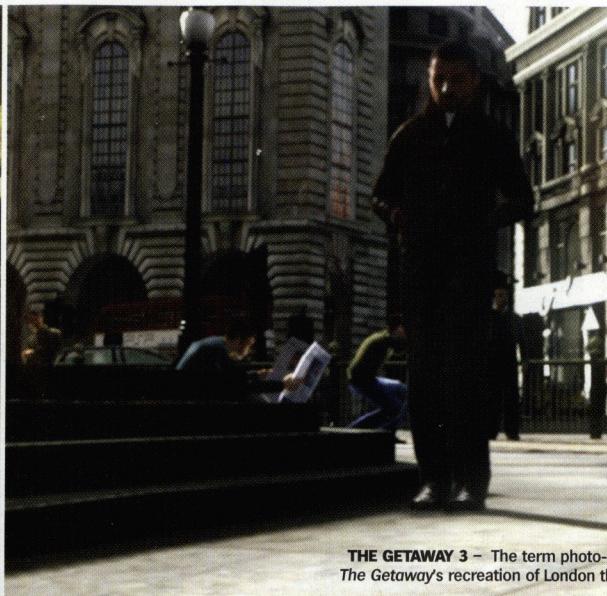
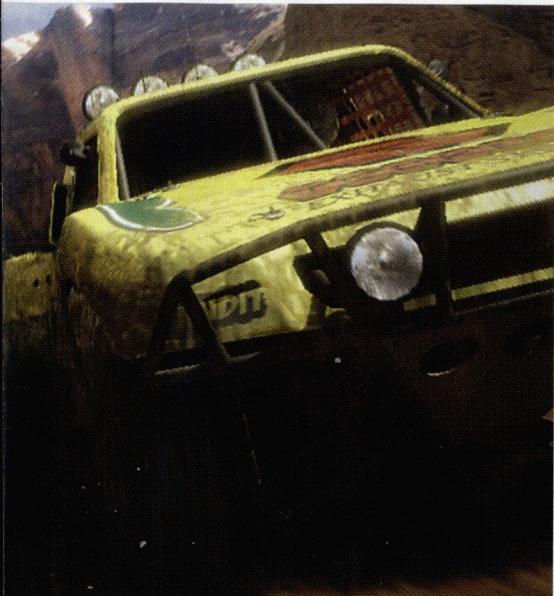


TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2006 – Damn, he's looking good!

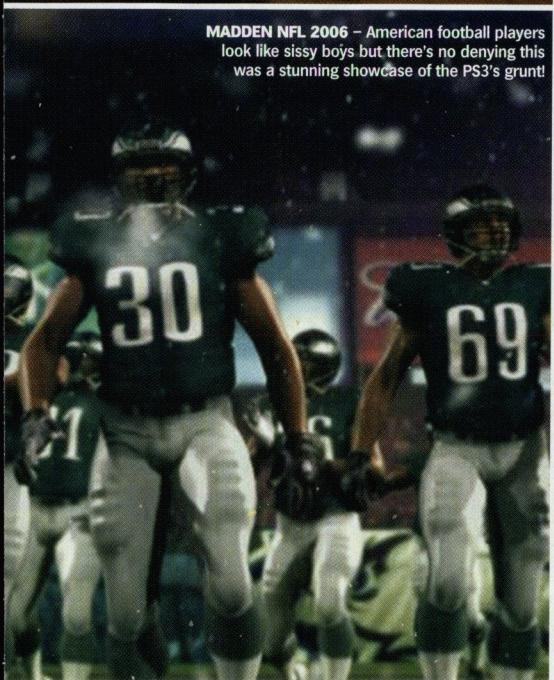


TEKKEN 6 – Kazuya's new character model was all that Namco revealed about its new fighter but it was enough to whip us into a frenzy! CG characters in movies wish they were this detailed!

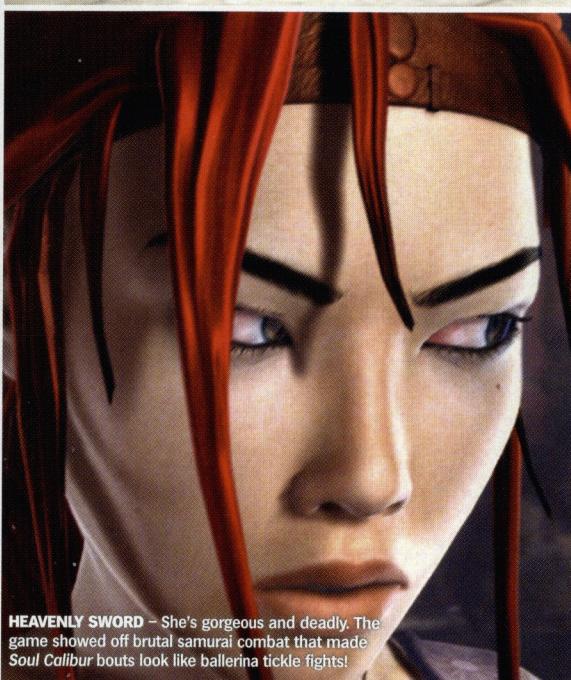




THE GETAWAY 3 – The term photo-realistic is bandied about a lot but if you can spot any weaknesses in *The Getaway*'s recreation of London then you've got much sharper eyes than we do. The PS3 is a monster!



MADDEN NFL 2006 – American football players look like sissy boys but there's no denying this was a stunning showcase of the PS3's grunt!



HEAVENLY SWORD – She's gorgeous and deadly. The game showed off brutal samurai combat that made *Soul Calibur* bouts look like ballerina tickle fights!



HEAVENLY SWORD – Oh, did we forget to mention that as well as the visceral combat, *Heavenly Sword* also showed off epic battlefields crowded with thousands upon thousands of warriors? Un-frickin'-believable!

PS3 TOP TEN

Ten reasons why PS3 will rule gaming!

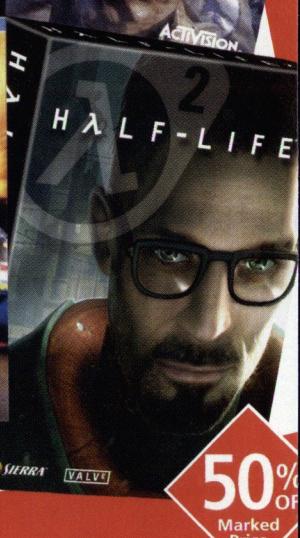
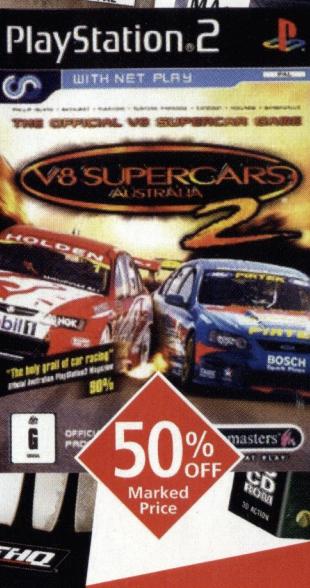
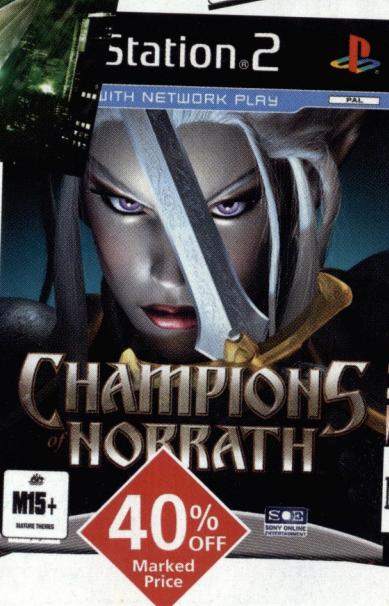
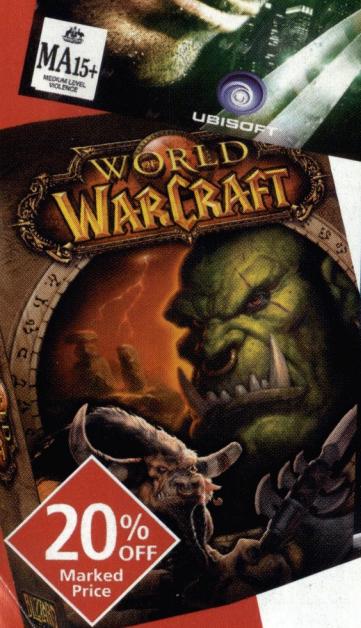
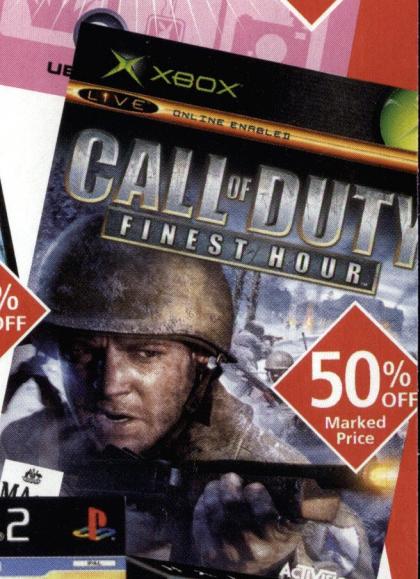
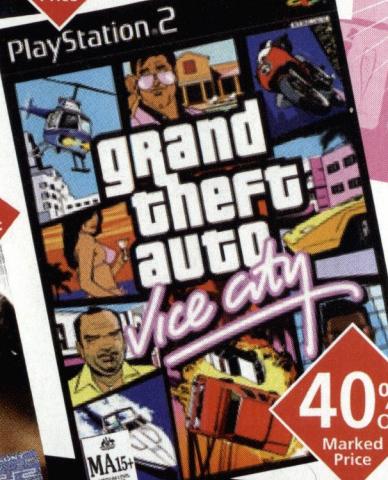
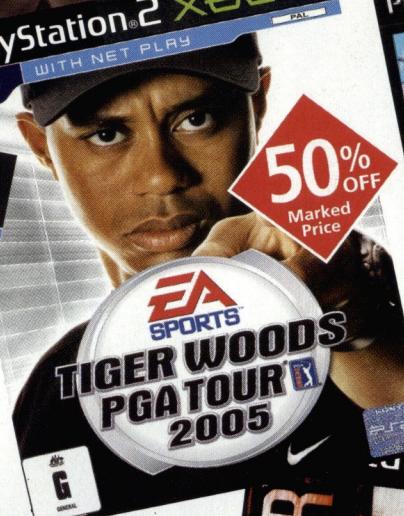
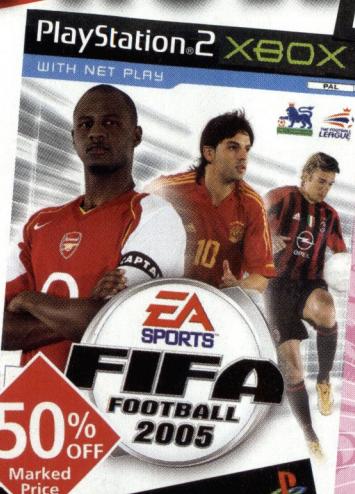
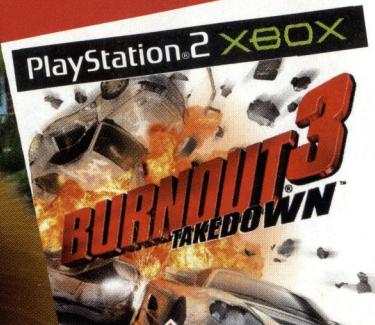
1. Photo-realistic graphics
We all say that it's the gameplay that counts and not the graphics, but one look at these games and you'll need a PS3 more than oxygen!
2. Dual HD TVs
Why restrict yourself to one TV when you can game across two TVs? There are plenty of uses for this feature – plus it just looks so money!
3. Blu-ray discs
As well as CDs and DVDs, PS3 can play Blu-ray discs. These babies can hold six times the data of DVDs and also support high definition movies.
4. Wireless controllers
Never again worry about losing friends in tragic controller strangulation accidents. You can connect up to seven controllers wirelessly via Bluetooth.
5. PSP
Use your PSP as another wireless controller for the PS3, or swap content between them via Wi-Fi.
6. Detachable hard drive
Just downloaded or created your own *Grand Turismo 5* map and you're heading over to a mate's place? Just bring your hard drive along!
7. HD EyeToy
Scan yourself into games and send and receive high definition video feeds from around the world.
8. Internet
Play your friends online or download anything from game content to MP3s – it's all good. Just don't let your mum find those *Debbie Does Dallas* movies.
9. DTS sound
The PS3 supports full DTS surround sound for games and movies.
10. Backwards compatibility
There's no need to ditch your old PSone and PS2 classics with the PS3's backwards compatibility. Your old favourites will also look even better when running in shiny new HD.

EB GAMES™
electronics boutique®

SALE

Our **BIGGEST** software sale ever!

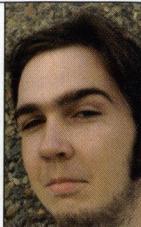
ON SALE NOW



Many more great titles on sale - See in store for details

Limited Time Only Stock may vary from store to store

Play-test



WELCOME!

After the unveiling of PS3 at E3, watching a bunch of killer next-generation footage and revealing and previewing an absolute stack of top-notch PS2 games for the rest of the year, we almost forgot there were some AAA titles already released this month. *God of War* has been getting rave reviews around the globe and now we've played it we can see why – it's a game fit for Zeus himself. Between that and the criminally fun *Destroy All Humans!* our PS2 hasn't cooled down for weeks!

LUKE REILLY
REVIEWS EDITOR

REVIEW CHARTER

FACT: OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION 2 MAGAZINE'S reviews are the best in the business. Our squad of reviewers play the games longer, harder and better than anyone. And we love what we do.

It's this dedication that means you can trust our comments and scores above anyone else's. Whether a game's superb or sewage, our experts will tell it like it is with buckets of opinion. Our experienced reviewers have written for the game industry's most revered publications, both here in Australia and overseas. Rest assured that these are opinions you can trust.

REVIEW RATINGS

HERE'S WHAT OUR REVIEW SCORES STAND FOR:

10/10	Nigh on revolutionary. A game that could change the face of gaming forever
09/10	A truly astonishing game. If you have a PlayStation 2, you need this now
08/10	Highly recommended
07/10	Good, solid fare that's well worth a look
06/10	Better than average, and ideal for hardcore fans of the genre
05/10	An average game
04/10	Poor, but still with the odd moment
03/10	Extremely disappointing
02/10	To be avoided
01/10	Beer mat

THE JOY OF GAMING
OPS2's gaming screen of choice this month has been this great portable number from Joytech. Weighing less than a kilo, it's perfect for taking around to a mate's place for multiplayer games sessions!



THE OPS2 AWARDS

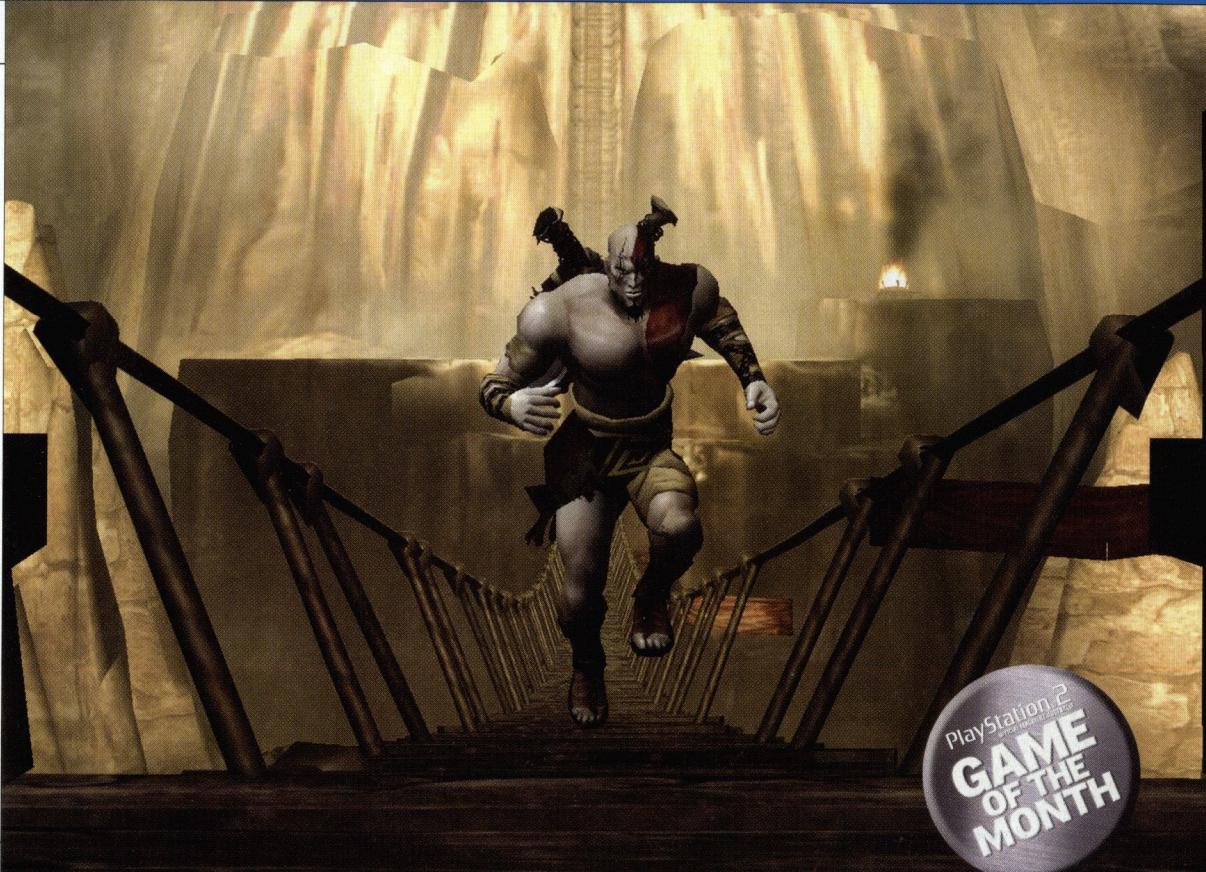
We don't hand out high scores for nothing, so when you see one of these, you'll know it's a sign of quality. Look for them on game boxes.



The Gold Award is a rare gem and only to be given to games that score 10/10. This score indicates gaming of simply incredible quality!

The Silver Award is for games that receive 9/10. If you see this, it's a sign of star quality, indicating that you should buy this game now!

The Bronze Award is for games that score 8/10. These games are highly recommended and are 100% guaranteed to satisfy.



GOD OF WAR

Take a bloodthirsty romp through Greek mythology!

62



DESTROY ALL HUMANS! **66**
Annihilate the feeble Earthlings! Mwahahaha!



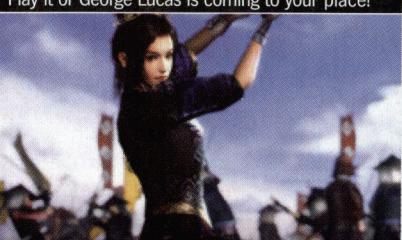
STAR WARS EPISODE III **70**
Play it or George Lucas is coming to your place!



COLD WINTER **74**
Um, you tell him he needs a licence to kill



STREET RACING SYNDICATE **76**
Underground racing – it's so hot right now



KESSEN III **77**
Crazy Japanese strategy shenanigans



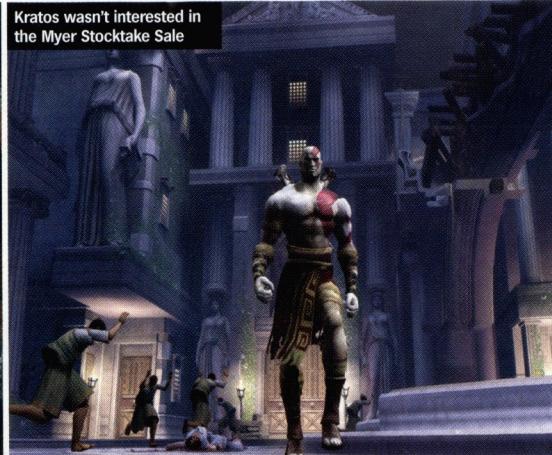
HOST IN THE SHELL **78**
Crazy Japanese ass-kicking-chick shenanigans

Play-test

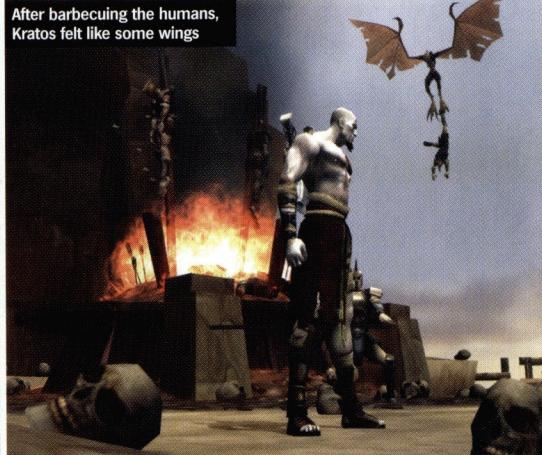
And to think that this thing is the easiest boss in the game...



Kratos wasn't interested in the Myer Stocktake Sale



After barbecuing the humans, Kratos felt like some wings



What's going on in that guy's pants?
We better call the OFLC... stat!

ACTION-ADVENTURE

GOD OF WAR

Get ready to kick ancient Greek god arse all over the shop!

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: SONY
DEVELOPER: SCEA SANTA MONICA
PRICE: \$99.95
PLAYERS: 1
OUT: JUNE
WEBSITE: US.PLAYSTATION.COM
60HZ MODE: YES
WIDESCREEN: YES
SURROUND SOUND: YES
ONLINE: NO

BETTER THAN

DEVIL MAY CRY 3 AND PRINCE OF PERSIA: WARRIOR WITHIN
WORSE THAN
ERM... WE'LL GET BACK TO YOU ON THIS ONE

LAB TEST

What they nailed this time
Pretty much everything. This is action adventure the way it should be
What they need to fix
Perhaps some more side quests or mini games to fatten out the experience

BACK STORY

God Of War has been a big hit in the States, garnering gamer praise and favourable reviews from the mags and websites. We haven't heard nearly as much about it on these sunny shores and frankly that should be amended. Can Ancient Greek gods find favour with an audience today? Here's hoping they can...

Reviewing games is a hell of a lark. Really, it is. After all, can you imagine a better gig than being paid to play games? Nope. It's a top job. However the downside is you tend to get desensitised to games. You've played them all before. It starts to become almost a chore. Not bad, you understand, but a little repetitive. Then, every now and then, a title comes along that makes even a jaded game reviewer sit up and say "dude... that kicks serious arse." God Of War is such a game.

It's hard to convey just how impressive this title is in just four short pages, but we'll try nonetheless. Just know from the outset – despite the fact we didn't give it a 10, GOW is one of the best games for the PlayStation 2. Ever.

Now, on with the show...

DOIN' IT GREEK-STYLE

Greek mythology, it would seem, is custom designed for the getting-turned-into-a-video game process. The combination of hardcore mortals who are constantly being tested by mysterious, manipulative gods and menageries of magnificent and terrible beasts creates an imaginative and compelling backdrop. It's weird then that not many games have used it.

Aside from nods to Greek mythology in a few gladiator games, Rygar is the only title that springs to mind when thinking of this rich source material. Now, with God of War, all that has changed. Zeus be praised.

First thing's first – the tone of GOW is not like the similarly themed sword and sorcery epic Clash Of The Titans (if you haven't seen this, grab it on DVD on the way to the shops to buy God Of War). That flick, whilst cool, was ultimately a pretty camp romp. GOW's about as far from a 'romp' as you can get. It's more of a bloody swathe, as in Kratos, the main character, cuts one right through the game.

We open with our gravel-voiced anti-hero standing on the edge of a cliff about to hurl himself to his death. Why? Well, that becomes clear as the game progresses. What we do know is that evidently things have gone rather pear shaped for our scarred, tattooed protagonist. With an expression of regret he hurls himself off the cliff...

...and we start the game three week's earlier. This

MYTH-TAKEN

GOW takes many liberties with Greek myths, but somehow retains the spirit of the stories. Epic, heroic and yet somehow tragic – it's an update of ancient beliefs.





BEASTS AND GODS

We've had a lot of games on the PS2 that contain big creatures but *GOW* has taken the thing up to 11. This creature shown actually holds a city on his back. A city that you'll explore and occasionally will be aware you're on a living breathing beast. But there's more. There's the Hydra, the gorgons, Ares, the minotaur... oh look, trust us. If you're into monsters you'll have a hell of time with *GOW*.



promise of a bleak and unhappy ending sets the hardcore tone of *God Of War* nicely. For, if you haven't grasped it from the stills and this review, *GOW* is a dark, bloody game steeped in myth and legend.

Kratos is a perfect example of the tone of the game. Enigmatic from the start, we ascertain (from the spectacular cut-scenes) that he was once a warrior whose bloodlust was unquenchable. He is haunted by the memories of all the people he has killed and does the bidding of various deities so that these dreams of his previous life will cease.

He's not quite a man and not quite a god, but something darker in between. Without giving away too much of the plot, Kratos is shortly given the task of assassinating the god Ares. Kill a god? How does a mere mortal accomplish that?

Well, you're gonna need some hard-core apparatus.

HACK, STAB, SLICE, AWWW... PRETTY!

Action-adventure games are often defined by the character's choice of weapon. The chained thing from *Rygar*, the pistols and sword from *Devil May Cry*, the whip from *Castlevania* - all iconic. *GOW* is no exception in this regard. You'll be wielding twin blades as you start play. These blades are attached to you and can extend far from your body on thick chains. They also crackle with a supernatural flame power.

To look at the effect is amazing. Imagine a fire twirling hippie from *Nimbin*, but instead of being surrounded by the stench of unwashed stoner youth,



Play-test

THREEWAY ACTION

WHAT A BAD-ARSE GAME!

GOW is pure bad-arse in every sense of the word. You want examples? Well any humans you run into and kill will give you health. You're encouraged to kill innocents. Want more? Well how about constant flashbacks to your warrior days where you literally rip people in half. And how about a minigame where you have to pleasure two women in your bed at once. Yep, you heard us right – a threesome minigame. Now that, readers, is BAD-ARSE.



MYSTERY MAN

Kratos' whole story isn't really revealed until the end of the game. This manages to keep the character dubious and kind of scary even as you're rooting for him. Nicely played.

bung in a half dozen huge monsters and replace the hippie with the hardest game protagonist we've had in ages and you'll start to get the idea.

Make no mistake, Kratos is a tough guy. Even at their lowest level the blades look fantastic, plus deal out a considerable amount of damage. Also – and this is possibly one of GOW's most charming aspects – the moves and combos are really easy to pull off. There is a fast but weaker attack that can be accessed using \textcircled{A} . There is a slow but stronger attack using \textcircled{B} . Not exactly rocket science and yet pressing these two buttons in various ways unleashes some of the most spectacular combat ever seen on the venerable black box.

Combined with \textcircled{B} to grab your enemies and \textcircled{X} to launch yourself in the air to perform some devastating airborne combos, Kratos is a sharp-looking fighting machine. He pulls off the kind of moves you'd like to invite your mates around to watch: plucking people from the air and tearing them in half, turning into a flaming whirlwind of fire and spinning your enemies into oblivion. All cool moves and all are really simple to activate.

Another nice feature of the combat is the upgrading. This can be done by collecting the blood that bursts from your downed enemies and certain chests, urns and boxes [shades of *Onimusha*'s soul collection here]. Certainly upgrading is nothing new in games, but GOW has really made it count. Too many titles feature meaningless upgrades that have barely any effect on your power. Not so Kratos' upgrades. The difference in every level of every weapon's upgrade is completely noticeable with new moves, powers and combos unlocked.

Your default blades are cool, but they're not where the weaponry goodness ends. You'll also pick up various god powers along the way. These are selected using the D-pad and depending on whether you have enough magic or

He really knows how to rub in a victory



We don't know what's going on here – it's all Greek to us



As you can tell, Kratos' favourite movie is Rocky



not can be activated by pressing \textcircled{B} . Lightning beaming from the sky, Medusa's gaze that turns your enemies into stone for a short period of time [in which you must smash their bodies to dust or they'll become flesh again]. Zeus' energy bolts and other abilities add real depth to the proceedings. And you'll need to be smart about using them too. Certain enemies (like the lumbering Cyclops) are better dispatched using Medusa's gaze whereas a swarm of harpies tend to go down from a well placed lightning bolt or simply swinging your flaming chains around you.

These special powers can also be upgraded, giving you the choice of upgrading your default weapon the most (so that you're always powerful) or giving your specials a kick in the pants (for maximum impact in those moments where the screen is swarming with ancient terrors).

Much like Paul, we found it best to play it both ways at the same time, but individual players will probably find their own stride.

I'M CONFUSED AND ON A LEDGE!

GOW's not all about combat. It's mostly about combat, certainly, but there's a solid ledge-jumper and puzzler included in this mix. Imagine *Prince of Persia* but with fewer acrobatics and you've got the level about right. Some of the puzzles GOW throws at you are actually quite difficult and require some solid lateral thinking and a cool head. This is often a big ask after you've staggered from the battlefield dripping with the blood of your enemies, but such is the path of one who seeks to destroy a god.

What's nice about the puzzles is that they fit with the overall tone of the game. You're not going to be prancing about looking for little gems and rescuing bunny rabbits here. It's all, move the giant crossbow into position so that you can smash through walls or push over the

enormous statue. Appropriately epic, even herculean, tasks for such a larger than life character as Kratos.

THE MOMENTS WE LIVE FOR...

GOW is more than a game. It's a series of beautifully realised, cinematic experiences linked together. It's one sublime cool moment after another. For instance: you're running through a fleet of ships as the waves crash on the wooden decks. Suddenly you're faced with the multi-headed hydra. You must impale the lesser heads before climbing to the giddy peak of the crow's nest and have it out with a foe many times your size.

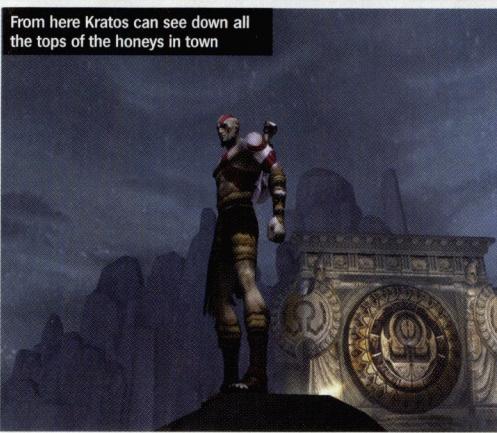
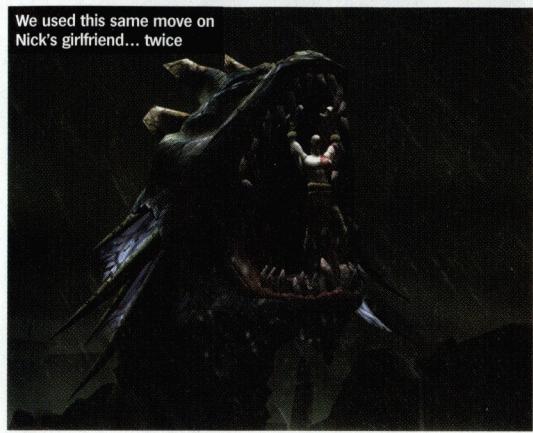
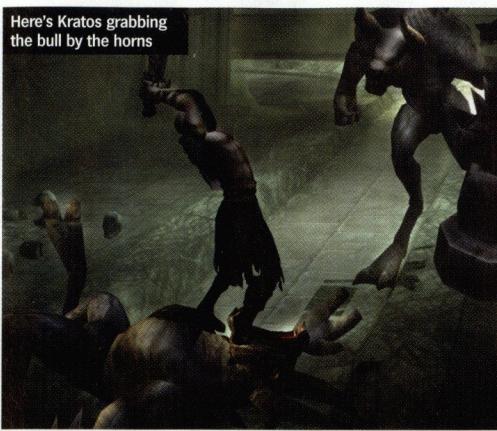
The main Hydra head is so massive it can knock you off your lofty position simply by roaring at you with enough vigour. The rain is pelting down, the beast gets closer and you go into a kind of mini-game where you have to press certain buttons at the right time. Do this correctly and you smash the Hydra's head to pulp and thread its skull onto the broken mast via its eye socket. Think we've ruined anything for you? We haven't, that happens in the first ten minutes of play.

Wait until you glimpse Ares, the god of war, as he towers over a battlefield, crushing hundreds of foes below his massive feet as if they were ants. Wait until you get to fight him!

Wait until the first time you wrestle a gorgon and slowly pull its head off. Or the first time you're climbing up the side of a cliff and grab a nearby opponent, smash his skull in against the cliff and drop his limp, rag doll carcass onto the jagged rocks below.

Wait until the first time you've got a minotaur pinned on the ground and you rapidly bash \textcircled{B} , trying desperately to impale his head before he knocks you off.

All these moments and many more, too numerous to mention, weave together a title that is so slick and cool that it's damn hard to find anything wrong with it.



CHECK OUT MAH PRETTY WHIPS

COMBO-TASTIC

Like to cause bulk damage but lack the skills to pull off "press \triangle seven times, quarter turn left, make a cup of tea and press \times six times" type combos? Fear not, unco gamer, GOW's combos are a piece of piss to pull off and yet every one looks like a work of gory art. Two button combos will lead to arterial sprays, enemies cleft in twain and blood-soaked cobblestones. Good times... good times.



BY THE GODS!

Graphically GOW is a thing of near perfection. The backgrounds are stunning, well designed and epic in style. However they're also varied enough to never become boring. Kratos himself looks fantastic, but it's with the gods and various monsters that the game shines. Such imagination and style given to creatures of legend, it truly is a joy to behold. This is the kind of game that looks so good you don't even mind watching someone else play it. It's a "wow!" title in every visual sense of the word.

The sound matches the graphics perfectly. Huge epic orchestral moments combined with chanting and operatic wails, plus the beat of tribal drums accurately capture the spirit of the mythic times represented. This is some of the nicest, and most fitting, music we've ever heard for a game. The voice acting is great, with Kratos coming off a little like Vin Diesel before he started doing kid flicks, and the supporting cast play their various roles well also.

But all the pretty colours and nice noises in the world won't save a game that plays like a dead rat in a cardboard box, but happily GOW is one of the most fun and cool titles out there. Take the quest elements of *Onimusha* but transplant it into ancient Greece, take the acrobatics and puzzle solving of *Prince of Persia* but combine it with the frantic fighting of *Devil May Cry* and you've not only got one lethal cocktail but a superficial idea of how things go down in GOW.

However it's more than simply the sum of these other great titles, it's something all it's own as well. The average gamer will probably take about 15-20 hours to complete the main game and then other minigames are unlocked, plus some footage of levels that were left out of this final version. This is probably

not going to represent huge value for money if you're the kind of person who never wants to look at a game after you've completed it, but the simple fact is, the quality is so good you'll probably want to have another go. There are enough little hidden extras and goodies around the place that returning time and time again is a pleasure rather than a chore. You can't fault these guys' when it comes to content.

For people who found *Devil May Cry 3* insanely difficult (be honest, there were a lot of you) and *Prince of Persia: Warrior Within* too acrobatic and not violent enough, *God Of War* is the game you. Hell, if you just want to play quite possibly the best action adventure game for the PS2, GOW is the game for you. In fact there's very little reason to NOT own GOW.

Put it this way, if it's managed to excite such a positive reaction from the occasionally jaded, bloodshot eyes of the staff of OPS2 imagine how much you'll like it. This is a seriously kick arse game that is destined for classic status and hopefully many sequels. Get into *God Of War* like you would a French maid's pants who's leaving the country this afternoon. You can thank us afterwards. **Anthony O'Connor**

OFFICIAL VERDICT

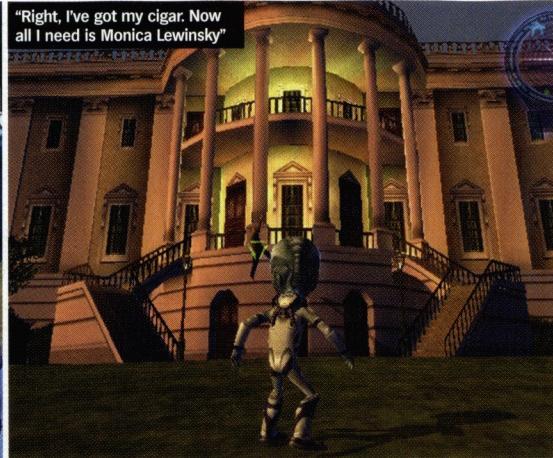
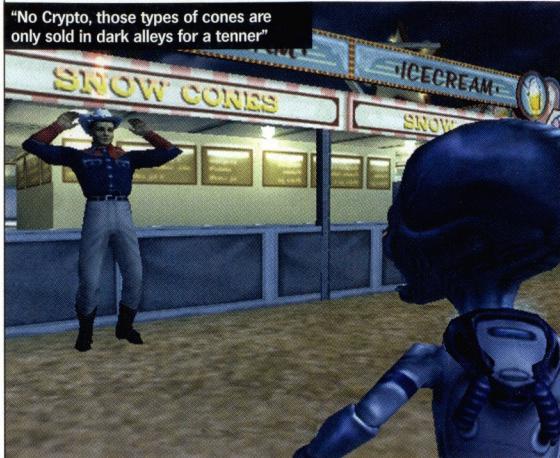
Graphics	10	Utterly breathtaking. A work of art
Sound	10	Operatic, epic music and solid effects. Beautiful
Gameplay	09	Violent bloody fun on a huge scale
Lifespan	08	Longish single player adventure with some tasty extras

God of War combines bloody action, puzzle-solving and cliff jumping in a brilliantly realised, beautiful-looking epic that rocks HARD on every level.

09



Play-test



ACTION-ADVENTURE

DESTROY ALL HUMANS!

Prepare for an onslaught of anal probe jokes!



DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: THQ
DEVELOPER: PANDEMIC STUDIOS
PRICE: \$99.95
PLAYERS: 1
OUT: JUNE
WEBSITE: DESTROYALLHUMANS.GAME.COM
60HZ MODE: YES
WIDESCREEN: YES
SURROUND SOUND: YES
ONLINE: NO

BETTER THAN

THE SIMPSONS: HIT AND RUN

WORSE THAN

GTA: SAN ANDREAS

LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

The concept is simply marvellous

What they need to fix

Bit more variety, please...

BACK STORY

Australians all let us rejoice for this Pandemic studios isn't from overseas! Nope they're from Brisbane. Made from a bunch of experienced developers and designers, Destroy All Humans! is the studio's first big release. The LA branch of Pandemic has been operating for longer, pumping out esteemed titles like Mercenaries, Star Wars: Battlefront, and Full Spectrum Warrior.

The anal probe: this mythological sci-fi weapon can be defined as something that is shot or inserted up one's anus in the name of scientific research, complete decimation of the anus' owner, or as a dirty (excuse the pun) joke on the subject. We here at OPS2 magazine do not possess an anal probe per se (we've had to improvise using office supplies on a few occasions), so were overjoyed and elated when a hot fresh copy of THQ's *Destroy All Humans!* recently landed in our grubby little mitts. For within this game lies many probes of the anal variety. Paul was particularly excited.

For those unattached to the gaming mania grapevine, DAH! is a kooky third-person adventure starring a four-foot tall alien named *Cryptosporidium* out to take over the world with a handful of ray guns and his flying saucer. Featuring the insane shooting action of *Transformers*, open GTA-styled levels, and wacky humour that flips the bird to everything from conservative '50s America to the mass media, it's a helluva unique package. It's like a game version of Tim Burton's *Mars Attacks* but on a much smaller scale. Forget swarms of alien invaders flying into the atmosphere in humming saucers, Crypto and his orbit-stationed cohort, Orthopox, are the only Furons even aware of Earth, and what's more, they're limiting their hostile extraterrestrial activity

to a few hotspots in the USA. Like the hand-on-heart Yank troops in the film *Black Hawk Down*, our dynamic alien duo believe that one of their own, *Cryptosporidium 136* (the clone created before your bundle of alien grunt), has crashed on Earth and in need of rescuing. Additionally all the cloning these Furons have been up to has weathered their genetic code to the point that they're facing extinction (reproducing the traditional way isn't possible due to their "complete and utter lack of genitalia"). Coincidentally it just so happens that many eons ago a ship fully of toey Furons (who obviously were endowed with genitalia) landed on Earth and knocked up the first batch of lady folk. Now, within the brain of every human is a specimen of pure Furon DNA that's ripe for the harvesting! Because of these pressing factors and the reality that humans, particularly 1950's Americans, are detestable, despicable creatures worthy only of annihilation, Crypto and Pox take it upon themselves to righteously DESTROY ALL HUMANS!!! Dun-dun-deh!!!



ANAL PIONEER AWARD

The first game to go where no other game has gone before...



WATCH THE SKIES

On your quest to eradicate all intelligent life on the planet you'll have to deal with six "sandbox" type areas that contain the game's missions and content. What do we mean by "sandbox"? Rather than feature linear levels with a start and end, like *Splinter Cell* for instance, the game adopts the open-area design similar to games like *GTA* and *THUG*. At the start of each mission the saucer will land at a predestined point and Crypto will have an objective to undertake like "kill X amount of straw-chewing inbreeds". After you've completed the mission what you do next is your choice. Hang around and explore the area for hidden collectables, tackle a side quest, destroy humans and raid their brains for strands of DNA, or get in your dish-o-death and rain hell from above, flattening houses, melting cows – that sort of stuff. When a mission is completed you can also choose to land your saucer at different landing sites around the area as well. Because even aliens think walking sucks.

It's a strictly outside affair, however. Take the first level, for instance. Called Turnipseed Farm, it's a deceptively large bunch of barns and pumpkin homes that spans a number of virtual hectares. Despite there being buildings on the map, you can't go inside any of them. Bummer. Apart from a couple of other mission relevant buildings later on, the external rule holds true for the rest of the areas Crypto visits. No running amuck in vintage cinemas or high schools allowed, sonny. It's all about fighting out in the open rather than rely on your corridor-shooter experience.

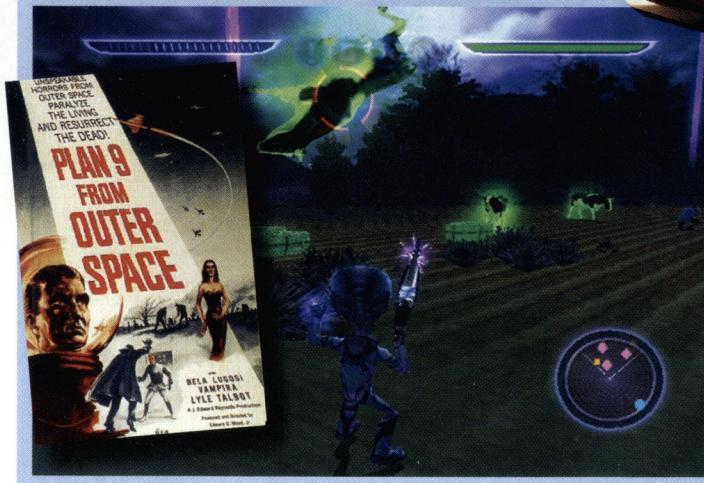
Fortunately, Crypto is a fairly mobile chap thanks to his jetpack. While it won't turn you into SuperCrypto, able to fly into the upper stratosphere, this handy little device can lift you onto the roofs of most buildings and out of the range of local forces. It also means tall walls aren't

We think this cow is taking the Hey Diddle Diddle nursery rhyme to far



ARCHIVED GOODIES!

Predictably there are a host of sundries that are unlocked as you complete various missions with each varying in their level of greatness. Unlocking the game's cutscenes isn't going to make you strip off your clothes and go for a joyous nude run down the street, for instance, but there are some things here worth checking out. There's a montage of random goofy screens (Crypto's crotch resting against a sheep's butt for example) set against random voice outtakes, which while not as funny as the creators may have thought, does provide proof that developers work some sanity-threatening hours. By far the best extras are two B-grade alien flicks from the '50s, *Teenagers From Outer Space* and *Plan 9 From Outer Space*. You get both whole films – the sort of material on which *DOH!* is based. Brilliant.



as much of a problem when you're hauling your grey ass around the place dodging the heat.

EARTH SCUM

However you'll eventually have more to worry about than the local doughnut-munchers in blue. You are, after all, a hostile invader from another planet. Similar to *GTA*, *DOH!* has an escalating alert metre with four levels. Hitting the first means a few humans have spotted you and are soiling their Calvin Kleins. No biggie; unarmed civilians are a breeze to dispatch. Level two motivates the boys in blue into action. Again, this isn't too bad. You only need ask yourself who'd win out of Darth Vader and Dennis Franz from *NYPD Blue* to work out why. Then things get a little saucier, a little hot to trot. Along comes Uncle Sam and his lads – fresh from dropping out of college and playing one too many rounds of *Rainbow Six*. You'll now have to deal with trucks and soldiers going for your grey jugular, as well as hulking tanks that fire massive shells



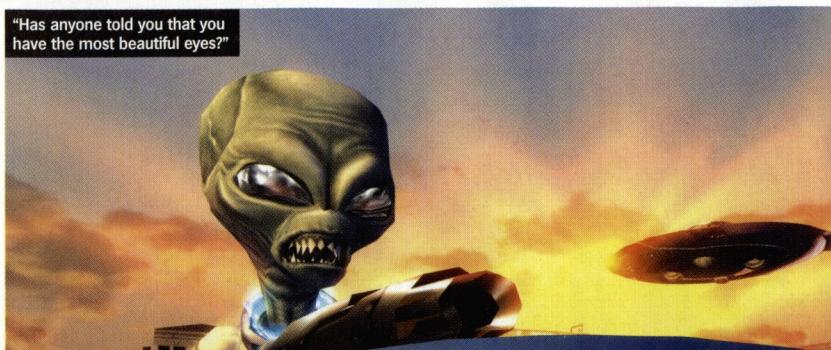
at will. Finally you'll hit the fourth level. It seems all the talk about secret government organisations and all the speculation about men in black, was true. The organization's name: Majestic. They're perogative: defend Earth against alien invaders – against YOU! Zooming around in black cars these guys pack some nasty alien-unfriendly weaponry. Copping a direct hit by one of their funky globules will almost entirely deplete Crypto's shield systems. And after they're down, you're like a fish in a barrel. Think that sounds tough? Later missions will see you square off against giant mechs and humans with psi-powers all out to get your guts on the scientific dissection table. Scared? Don't be.

Despite all the above opposition, *DOH!* is never really that hard. The only difficult spots come towards the game's end when dying means you've got to replay the entire mission – a cheap way of extending the difficulty, but it's necessary to prevent players cutting through the

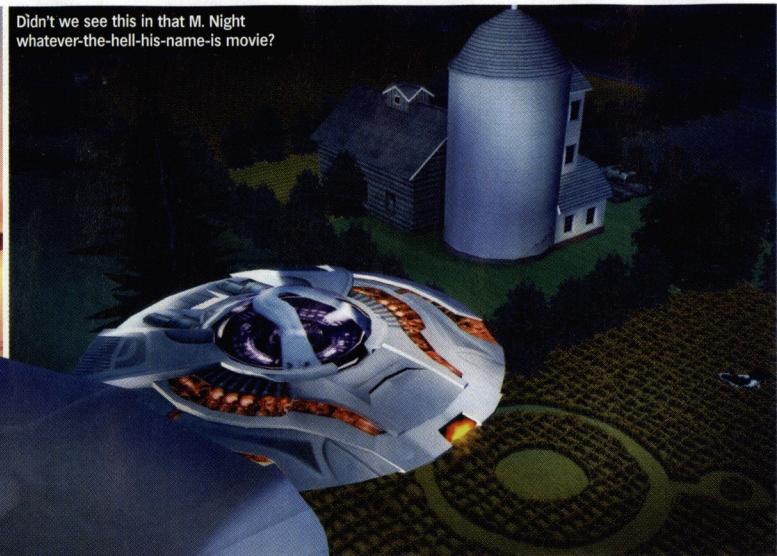


Play-test

"Has anyone told you that you have the most beautiful eyes?"



Didn't we see this in that M. Night whatever-the-hell-his-name-is movie?



game like the ebola virus. You see, Crypto is not to be messed with. Not that we'd expect anything less from a warmongering alien with technology light years ahead of our own, mind you.

Every alien needs a stout collection of human-crushing, flesh destroying ray guns and Crypto is no exception. Just take a gander at his Zap-O-Matic, the first weapon you get your hands on. This baby fires out a rod of pocket lightning, scrambling the brain of whomever it hits like an egg. The usual in-game upgrades are there, too, with the Zap-O-Matic going from being a two-man killer to a pack slayer when fully souped up. The noise of cheeks flailing while their owners are caught in the electric charge is as soothing as Beethoven's own Violin Sonata (in F). The gun you'll use the most though, by far, is the Disintegrator Ray. While ammo must be collected, it has the savvy ability to quickly melt the flesh off human bones. It's graphically violent – but in a jolly way.

Now it's time to spill the proverbial beans on Crypto's special weapon, his instrument of wanton pain and suffering, his... anal probe. That's right, Crypto is fully equipped with a weapon that actively seeks out foe's chocolate shafts. Just tapping the fire button sends out a quick bolt that tickles whoever it hits and causes them to

sprint off on a short run holding their rump cheeks, but fully charged it fires out a bolt that will imbed itself so far up the victim's crack, they'll fold over backwards before their brain explodes out of their head, revealing a nice blob of DNA to snatch. Are you excited? Disappointingly you'll get over the anal probe pretty quickly, no matter how hilarious you find toilet humour. This is primarily because it's not that great a weapon when in the thick of battle, and there are faster ways to harvest DNA, better ways – yep, you should use your mind powers instead.

WHO WANTS HEAD?

That ugly, oversized cranium has got to be good for something, right? Apart from gun-ho weaponry, you can use Furon mind power to overcome and conquer those dastardly Earthlings. If you want to extract a brain, simply focus on a human not alerted to your presence and with a few button presses you'll have that cerebrum out in no time. This also works on humans who've died with their heads intact – no point in leaving a good brain stem just lying about. That's not all you're evil all-conquering mind can do. In fact the first trick you'll learn is the Cortex Scan, this allows you to read a subject's mind, often yielding sexually orientated innuendo. There are, for example, a lot of guys in DAH's

SLAG OFF THE SUPERPOWER AWARD
Few games have made Americans look so blatantly inbred. It's all in the name of humour, of course.



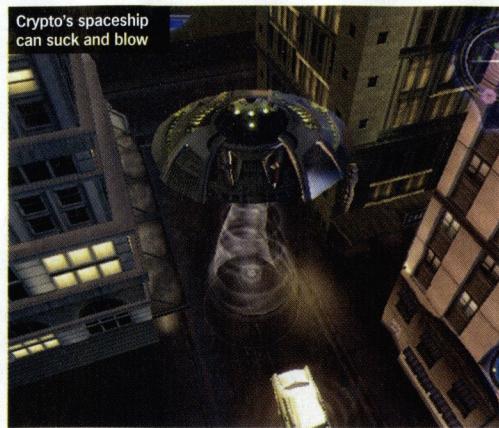
RAINING HELLFIRE

Apart from the upgrades available to Crypto on the ground, collecting enough DNA stems will allow you to purchase saucer upgrades as well. You'll start off with the standard Death Ray and Abducto Beam, but you'll then obtain the Sonic Boom weapon. Not only can you make short work of buildings with this device, but you can also take out a number of tanks, trucks, and vehicles with one well-placed shot. The final WMD you grab is the Quantum Deconstructor. You'll need this for the last few missions. It's large expanding globs of green death destroy anything it touches – even buildings – in a single strike. We hear Australian construction companies are actually bidding for the technology.

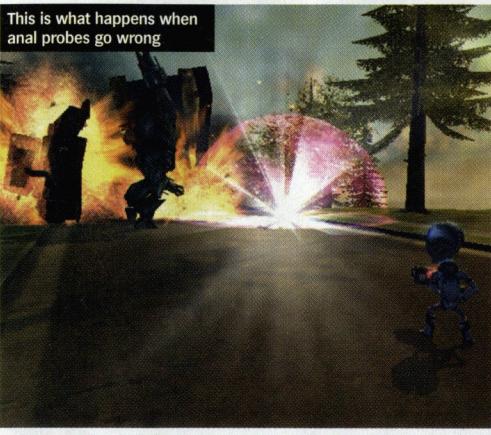
game world that fancy Rock Hudson as a bit of a spunk. The Cortex Scan is particularly useful when used to support your Holobob powers. Calling on power from Crypto's on-screen concentration bar, you can use this ability to take the form of any human you see. While Incognito, however, your concentration will steadily diminish unless you continue to use your Cortex Scan on passers by. This ability lets you play the game in two ways: you can go in guns blazing, or use sneaking tactics.

Not to be outdone is Crypto's Hypno Blast. By using this on an unsuspecting human you can force them to dance around and cause a distraction or else fall asleep. In special situations you can also hypnotise people to open locked doors for you or follow you back to your saucer. During an early Rockwell mission we were sent out to capture the dumbest human we could find at the fair and bring them back to the saucer for a bit of anal probing. It turned out that the village idiot happened to be the curvy Miss Rockwell pageant winner! A quick bit of hypnosis and she bolted off back to the landing site and into our saucer. And we didn't even have to buy her dinner.

The real ace up Crypto's sleeve however, and in fact the best thing about the gameplay overall, is the element of Psychokinesis. Using his mind powers Crypto can pick up



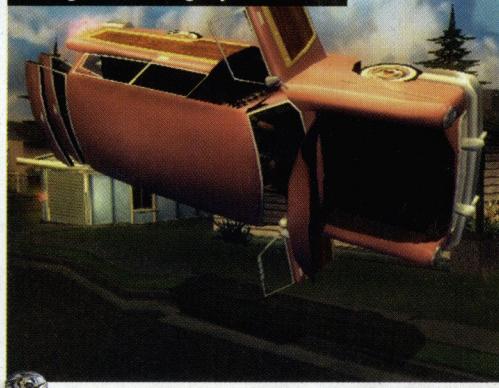
Crypto's spaceship can suck and blow



This is what happens when anal probes go wrong

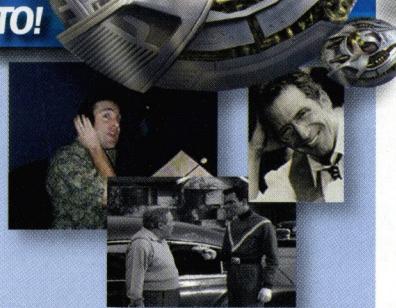


This looks like the car Naz lost his virginity in. Meaning that it's an imaginary car



THE VOICE OF ORTHOPOX AND CRYPTO!

The voice work in *Destroy All Humans!* is some of the best yet. Cult voice actor Richard Steven Horvitz, known mostly for this work on Yank cartoon *Invader Zim*, voices Orthopox, or Pox as he's also known, though it's not his first videogame gig as an actor. Last year he also supplied dialogue for the dork sensation *Everquest II*. Apart from voicing a number of other cartoon characters, he's also popped up in a number of small-fry late '80s motion pictures like *Summer School* and *How I Got Into College*. We're guessing he'll be doing a lot more game work from now on. The voice behind Crypto belongs to J. Grant Albrecht, apart from having a reoccurring part in *C.S.I.: NY* as Dr Leonard Giles, Albrecht has also contributed to a stack of other videogames, including *Doom 3*, *James Bond: Nightfire*, and most recently as The End in Kojima's *Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater*. My, my it is a small world.



humans, cows, objects – and later on tanks and other vehicles – and later on tanks and other vehicles – and fling them about the place at will. This adds a much-needed dimension to the straightforward shooter action allowing you to dispatch scores of attacking humans by, say, tossing a soon-to-explode car into their midst. The distance each object goes is dependant on their weight, so throwing a tank often causes it to spin and twist in the air like a Russian gymnast for 10-20 metres, while you can throw humans into the air till they disappear out of sight. It looks schweeter than heaving cleavage, and it goes a long way to making you feel like a superior life form.

UFO piloting is the other element that separates *DAH!* from the pack, though it's not what it could've been. Apart from being able to jump into your craft after a mission and go on an ad-hoc rampage of destruction, there are a few set pieces involving your saucer. You'll get a bunch of weapon upgrades for it as well, but the problem is that it all feels a bit too simple. You hover around, trying to dodge the scores of missiles and rockets fired your way, collecting health powerups and ammo, destroying the relevant targets, and that's it. It feels like an old '90s arcade game that has more to do with luck than skill. You can't, for instance, see many of

the rockets coming your way until they're metres from your hull. All too often you'll look at your saucer damage and realise you've gone from maximum integrity to bordering on destruction in a nanosecond. There's just no strategy or thought required.

In fact, despite all the suave gadgets and powers, lack of depth is the overall game's Achilles' heel. It's as though *DAH!* is the Tonka truck of gaming: rigid and firm in what it does, but lacking variety. While it starts off great fun, as you taste everything the game has to offer, its grip begins to weaken as you continue. Despite the prime objective, levels are either all about destroying scores of humans, or sneaking around with the Holobots to get to a specific point where upon you can start destroying scores of humans. It's too simple – and not really in that simple-but-fun addictive way. Running around with your disguise on is fun the first time, but is worn thin seven or eight missions later. And despite all the weapons and the impressive Psychokinesis, there's nothing about the combat of the game that hooks you – really hooks you. Combat – the crux of the game – is all about guiding around Crypto in figure 8s while tapping the fire button and flipping vehicles over. That's as deep or intense as it gets.

If you're not such a fussy player there's a strong chance

the game's sensational presentation will make you forget about all criticisms. From the outstanding voice work (see 'The Voice of Orthopox and Crypto') to the blazingly vibrant game world, complete with ethereal lighting effects, it never ceases to astound. Even when taking out legions of G-men, tanks, and hulking robots, the game only rarely dropped from its robust frame rate. *Destroy All Humans!* is a stunner.

However, being gorgeous isn't enough to warrant *Destroy All Humans!* being a necessary purchase. It's only got a limited, albeit slick, number of tricks up its sleeve. Fortunately its flashy ideas and bright execution still make it an enjoyable romp for the alien inclined. **James Ellis**

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics **09** No drab textures here. One of the PS2's finest

Sound **09** Suitably oddball voice work and music

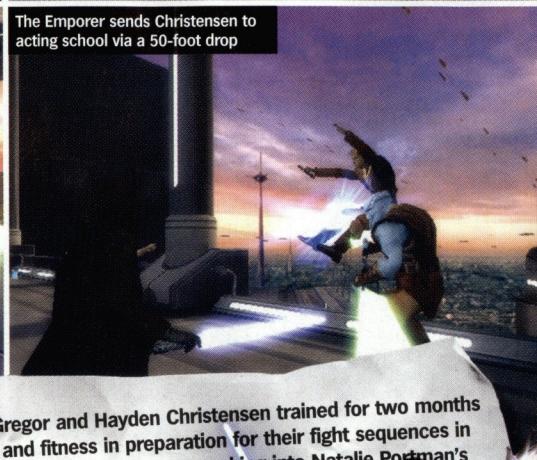
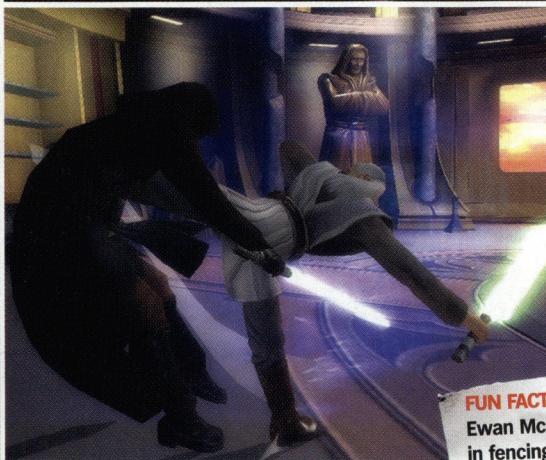
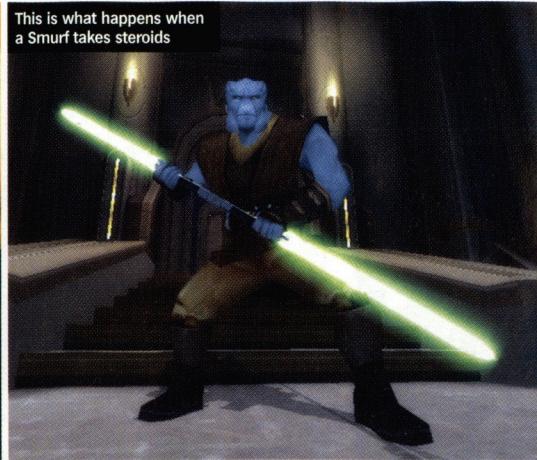
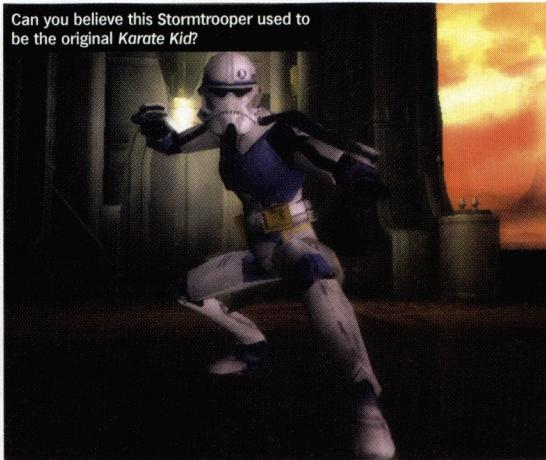
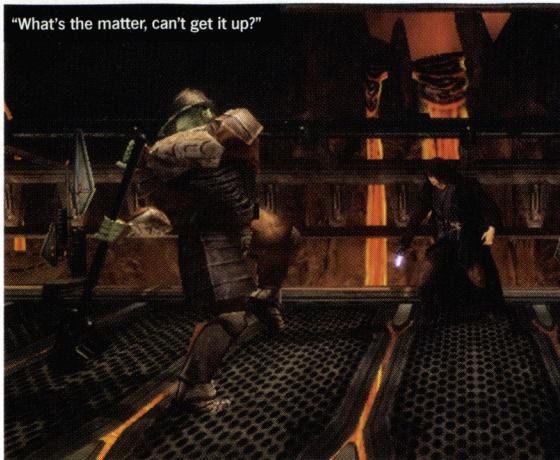
Gameplay **07** Unabashed novel fun. Perhaps too simple, though

Lifespan **06** Extras and side-missions are here. But will you bother?

Buzzing with energy and conceptual originality, it's a game anyone can pick up and play. Not deep or tantalisingly addictive, though.

08

Play-test



ACTION-ADVENTURE

STAR WARS EPISODE III: REVENGE OF THE SITH

Last ever Star Wars film = last ever Star Wars game? Yeah, right...

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: EA
DEVELOPER: THE COLLECTIVE
PRICE: \$99.95
PLAYERS: 1-2
OUT: NOW
WEBSITE: WWW.LUCASARTS.COM/EP3/
60HZ MODE: NO
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: YES
ONLINE: NO

BETTER THAN

STAR WARS: BOUNTY HUNTER
WORSE THAN

GOD OF WAR

LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

The powerful feeling of being a total badass with a laser sword

What they need to fix

Improve co-op mode, tweak controls and camera

BACK STORY

The Collective was the team responsible for the satisfyingly authentic *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* on Xbox as well as the somewhat disappointing *Indiana Jones and the Emperor's Tomb* on PS2. Its next project is the graffiti-stained urban-'em-up, *Mark Ecko's Getting Up: Contents Under Pressure*.

A

t last the sixth and final *Star Wars* film is upon us in the form of *Episode III*, effectively bringing the epic to a shuddering climax only midway through the complete adventure (which would be a familiar story for anyone who's slept with Paul). At the time of writing this review the film is yet to receive a theatrical release, so a lot of our questions at this point are still unanswered. Will Hayden Christensen learn the true power of the dark side, and maybe even how to act? Will Natalie Portman once again be on "high-beam" for the majority of the movie (fingers crossed)? And will the sexual tension between C3PO and R2D2 finally reach a grinding crescendo in a provocative hot machine oil spa scene where sexual sparks will literally fly?

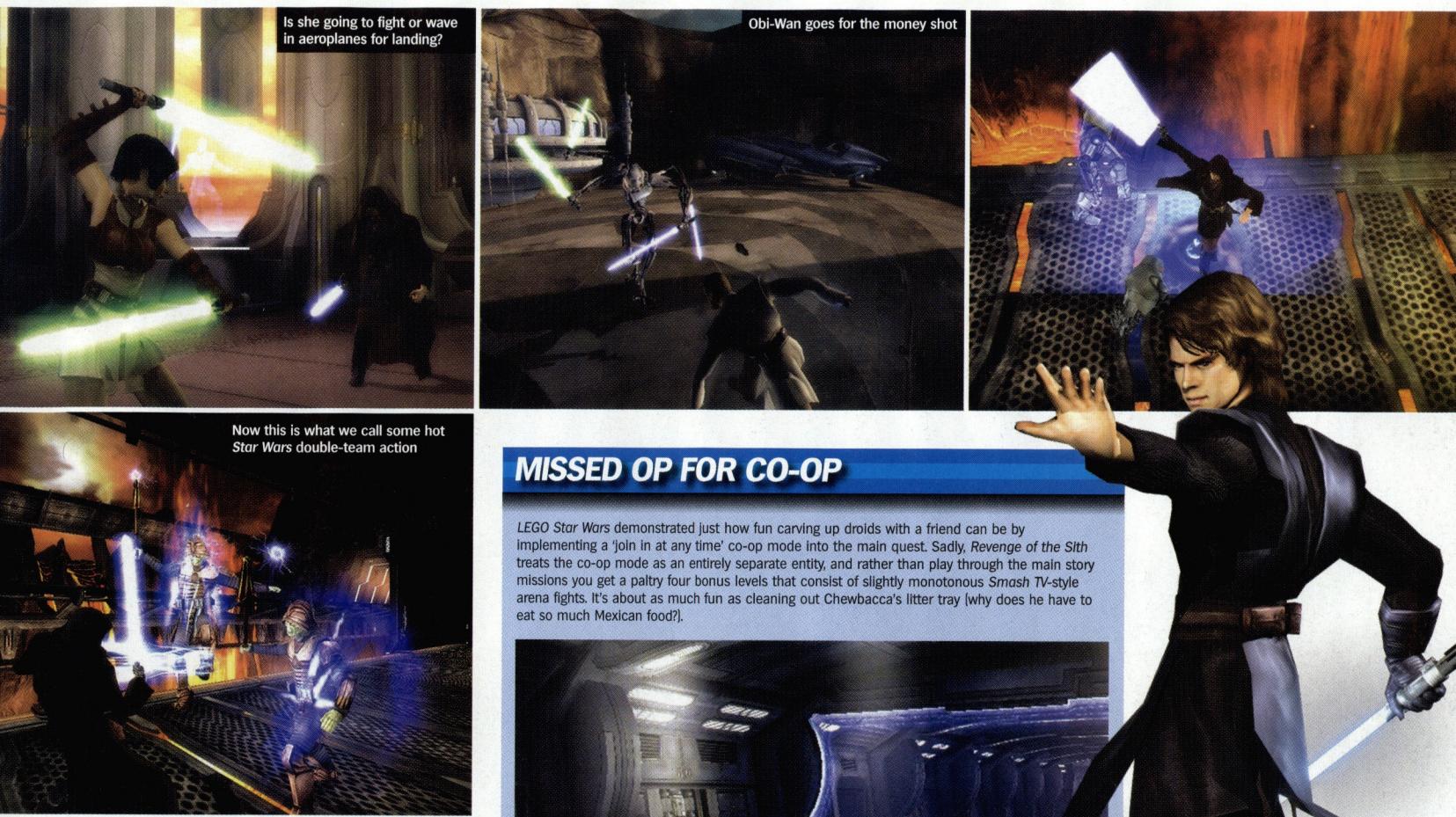
One question we can safely answer is, "Will there be a big budget movie-to-video game tie-in?", because there already is and we're currently holding it in our hot little hands (don't ask us what we're using to type). We're happy to report that for the most part it's bristling with energy and creativity much like George Lucas' brain circa 1977, and not at all bloated and lifeless like George Lucas' second chin circa 2005 (seriously though what's with that neck? It's like he's trying to swallow the Death Star - or his own wallet).

GRIP YOUR SABRE

Revenge of the Sith closely follows the plot of the film but focuses on the one thing that excites *Star Wars* fans more than Carrie Fisher in a bikini and shackles; fast and flashy lightsaber combat. During the 16 levels you will alternate control between Jedi Master Obi-Wan Kenobi and his petulant apprentice Anakin Skywalker (voted most likely to become half man-half machine and control the galaxy, in his senior class at the Jedi Academy), Force-flinging and sabre-swinging your way through droids, Sith Lords and Jedi Knights in an unrelenting and violent adventure.

Thankfully this is *Episode III* so Obi-Wan and Anakin are both already adept at battle and in the ways of The Force; meaning that you don't have to start from scratch and unlock Force powers and lightsaber techniques - you'll be a fully capable Jedi from the get go. As early on as the very first level you'll be able to walk confidently into a room full of battle droids, Force-push a computer monitor off a wall and into a nearby gun turret, forward flip over the heads of the gathering droid army, pause momentarily to light a cigarette for R2D2 with the blade of your sabre (conflict makes him





nervous), before gracefully slashing the unsuspecting droids in half, throwing in a few gratuitous sabre-swings for the fans at home and nonchalantly reverse-stabbing the sneaky rolling droideka behind you.

Your existing Jedi abilities and Force powers can be upgraded at the end of each level by using the experience points earned during combat (not unlike the upgrade system used in EA's *Return of the King*). There are ten different attributes that you can level up your character with, so it's entirely up to you whether you want to be able to fire lightning out of your fingertips, use mind control to turn enemies against each other or become a master of boomeranging your lightsabre around the environments at will.

Progress through the game also unlocks extra features such as new combatants for the Duel mode (see 'Sabres at Dawn'), bonus missions that allow you to control extra characters such as the awesome four sabre-wielding General Greivous, and a large collection of production artwork stills. For the most part the bonus missions act as a type of survival mode where you are confined to one location and must face waves of enemies of gradually increasing in difficulty, before finishing up in an edge-of-your-seat sabre duel.

CHOKE YOUR YODA

One of the coolest aspects of *Revenge of the Sith* is that it lets you be bad. Without spoiling the plot of the film too much; Anakin begins the game with good intentions but it's not too far in that he starts slaughtering peace-loving Jedi's left, right and centre. The game lets you experience firsthand Anakin's slide from light to dark, while at the same time living out perennial goody two-shoes Ben Kenobi's plight, eventually finishing up in the climactic battle we've all been waiting for (we won't reveal whose corner you'll be in).

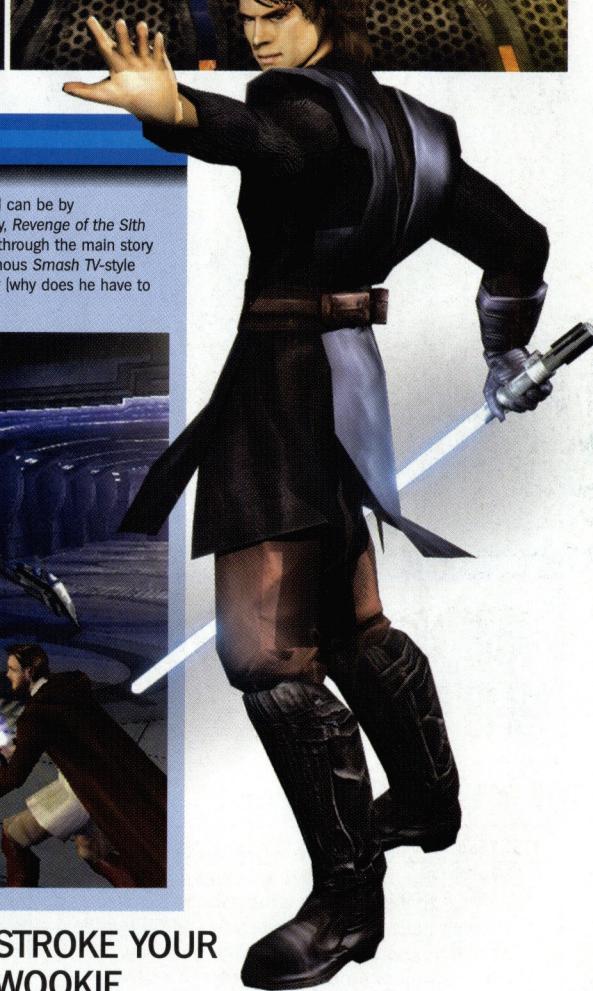
MISSED OP FOR CO-OP

LEGO Star Wars demonstrated just how fun carving up droids with a friend can be by implementing a 'join in at any time' co-op mode into the main quest. Sadly, *Revenge of the Sith* treats the co-op mode as an entirely separate entity, and rather than play through the main story missions you get a paltry four bonus levels that consist of slightly monotonous *Smash TV*-style arena fights. It's about as much fun as cleaning out Chewbacca's litter tray (why does he have to eat so much Mexican food?).



Anakin's turn to the dark side arrives just in time to alleviate the early stage of boredom that sets in after the initial few levels of the game. Up until then, the hordes of battle droids that you must cut a swathe through eventually start to wear out their welcome and become a bit repetitive, so it's just as well Anakin turns on his Jedi brethren so that you actually have someone interesting to fight for the second half of the adventure.

Fighting really is the one and only focus of *Revenge of the Sith*. There are absolutely no puzzles to solve, unless you count cutting open doors with your sabre, and the only other diversions from the main hack-em-up gameplay are the occasional token gun turret sequences that allow you to momentarily shoot down enemy aircraft. There are other times during the adventure where you must use The Force to shift large obstacles such as structural ruins or vehicular wrecks out of your path or Force-jump to higher platforms, but these moves are entirely location specific and context-sensitive and basically serve to retain the cinematic feel of the game.

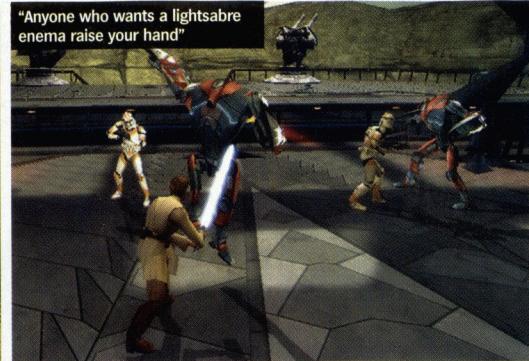


STROKE YOUR WOOKIE

As the game is entirely focussed on combat, it's crucial that it gets the controls right. You get three buttons for sabre attacks and three buttons for Force powers, plus a jump button and an all important block button. The system works pretty well because you never have to worry about bringing up a fiddly menu to select different attacks in the middle of a scrap; everything's available to you at all times and you can nimbly switch from basic slashing to impressive Force moves at will. However, the lock-on system can at times make fighting more hit and miss than Yoda after drinking his height in Jesus Juice. The block button also acts as the lock-on button, allowing you to cycle through enemy targets with the right thumbstick. Now that's creative.

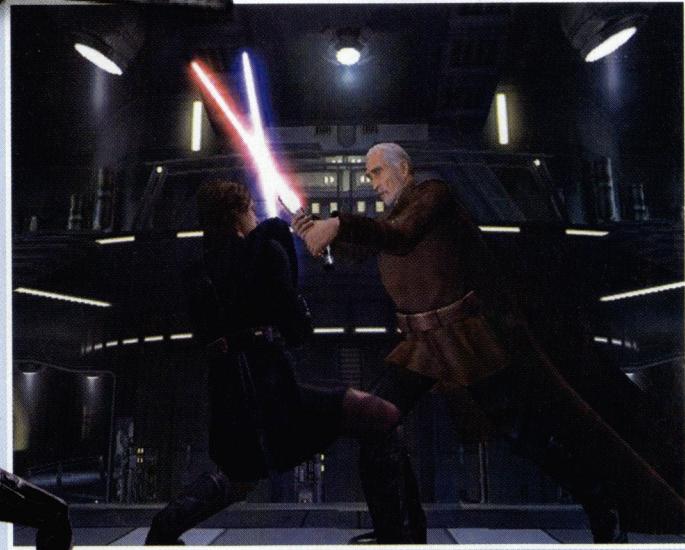
Sadly it's far too unreliable, and there's just too

Play-test



SABRES AT DAWN

Each major Jedi and Sith Lord, as well as a variety of arenas from the main game, can be unlocked for use in the one-on-one duel mode. Playable characters include Anakin, Obi-Wan, Mace Windu, Count Dooku and some extra special secret characters; all possessing their own unique moves lists. Matches take the form of Street Fighter-style three round bouts, and can be reasonably addictive with a friend. However, the moves are more limited than Darth Vader's breathing during an asthma attack, so it's unlikely to keep your copy of *Soul Calibur II* on the shelf for long.



USE YOUR HAND SOLO

But enough of the gripes, as there's really a lot of *Revenge of the Sith* to love. The developers have totally nailed the different fighting stance and style of each iconic character – Count Dooku appears laid back and elegantly intimidating, while Yoda explodes around the surroundings like Sonic the Hedgehog in heat. There are also nice environmental damage effects; from the obvious exploding barrels to the little sabre-burn marks left on hand rails and the like. The animation of the characters is fluid, and despite the often frantic action on-screen, not to mention the dramatic large scale aerial battles that are often happening in the background; the frame-rate never drops. In fact, often the clashes in the background are so grandiose that you're likely to find yourself distracted from the main action and cop a blaster bolt right up your Dagobah System.

As you'd expect the musical score and sound effects are both superbly authentic, although the voice acting leaves a bit to be desired. It's clear that the real actors were unavailable to voice their characters (heads up to LucasArts – we hear Mark Hamill works for cheap), so instead we get imitative stand-ins. The two main characters throw out a number of one-liners during combat, and with ridiculous lines such as Anakin's "You

many times where you'll be frantically trying to target a distant gun turret that's gradually giving you the suntan from hell, and meanwhile you end up hurling your lightsabre in entirely the opposite direction.

These occasional problems are intensified by the inclusion of an entirely fixed camera. Often the camera will inappropriately zoom in on the action leaving you with absolutely no idea as to where your off-screen enemies are blasting you from – there are no on-screen arrows or indicators to show their whereabouts, making it frustrating work.

Revenge of the Sith also suffers from a lot of invisible walls due to the extremely linear path that you have to follow, and that would be fine if it wasn't for the fact that sometimes enemies get stuck beyond the invisible walls and the only way for you to attack them is with a sabre-throw or Force-lightening manoeuvre – that old trick.

To their credit, the developers have included a nice feature that ensures that any objects or characters blocking the fixed camera view become partially transparent so as not to impede your view of the action.

can't stop me. I won't be stopped" – at least you can't complain that the corny dialogue isn't up to the same standard as the films.

It may be a bit too short, overly linear and plagued with sporadic control issues, but for pure lightsabre combat, *Revenge of the Sith* offers the most fun to be had with a humungous laser sword since the popular *Super Star Wars* series during the earlier '90s. It's not quite as enjoyable as the cute and funny *LEGO Star Wars*, but it has far more depth combat-wise and serves as a solid companion to the final film instalment in the hallowed series. The Force is (mostly) strong with this one; Jedi wannabes should trust their instincts. **Tristan Oglivie**

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics	08	Consistent frame-rate despite fast and furious sabre-swishing
Sound	08	Voice acting is adequate, music and effects are superb
Gameplay	07	Repetitive at times, brilliant at others
Lifespan	07	A short main quest, a fair list of unlockables

Revenge of the Sith may be inconsistent and a bit too short, but it delivers the most exhilarating lightsabre combat we've ever played!



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Play-test



Jeez, who's going to win? The guy with the machine gun or the guy with the friggin' rocket launcher?



"Whoa that curvy was strong"



Jeez, who's going to win? The guy with the machine gun or the guy with the friggin' rocket launcher?



X FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER

COLD WINTER

Cool? You bet your arse!



FREE COLD WINTER Interactive Mini Guide
available exclusively at
www.au.playstation.com/coldwinter/

In *Cold Winter*, you're going to need more than live to die another day. This free interactive surviving *Cold Winter*!

FUN FACT!

Acclaimed alternative comic book writer Warren Ellis was hired by Swordfish Studios to co-author the plot for *Cold Winter*. Ellis' body of work includes *Wolverine*, *Ultimate Fantastic Four*, *Transmetropolitan*, and *Hellblazer*, whose title character was recently brought to life on the big screen by Keanu Reeves in the movie *Constantine*.

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: VIVENDI

UNIVERSAL

DEVELOPER: SWORDFISH STUDIOS

PRICE: \$99.95

PLAYERS: 1-2 [1-8 ONLINE]

OUT: JUNE

WEBSITE: WWW.COLDWINTER.COM

60Hz MODE: NO

WIDESCREEN: NO

SURROUND SOUND: YES

ONLINE: YES

XBACK STORY

Swordfish Studios, operating out of the United Kingdom, are relatively new kids on PS2 block, having had great success on PC with *Hostile Waters*, and the change of format has not hurt in the least. Any game that lets you play a gritty, bloodthirsty MI6 agent without a hint of Roger Moore has got to be a winner.

BETTER THAN

KILLZONE

WORSE THAN

TIMEPLITTERS : FUTURE

PERFECT

LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

Fourteen, count them, fourteen dismemberment zones! Can you find them all?

What they need to fix

Larger arenas for multi-player and two words... dual wield

It's a blisteringly cold day. You've entered the lodge to escape the freezing conditions. You survey the room, checking out the ski bunnies when out of the corner of your eye you see Jessica Alba... alone. She beckons you to join her for a drink and, reluctantly, you oblige her. She drops her room key into your hand and leaves you with a sly wink. Is *Cold Winter* that good? No, nothing could be – but it damn well comes close!

Forget what you've heard or know about first-person shooters and buckle up for *Cold Winter*, the unashamedly, no-holds-barred, goriest, in your face splatter fest from Vivendi Universal. With more bullet wounds than an old school John Woo movie and a body count to match, *Cold Winter* gives you no nonsense gaming stripped back to its core. No long tutorials, no finger dislocating controls, no headache inducing camera angles, just an immediately accessible, incredibly immersive experience.

You take on the persona of Sterling, Andrew Sterling – an ex-SAS hardnut recruited by MI6 for an assignment in China. Your mission goes horribly wrong and you're captured and incarcerated in a prison somewhere in the Changsha Province. Your government disowns you and you are viciously tortured and left to rot. Jump forward six months and you are finally located by your fellow operative (and sex kitten) Kim who infiltrates the prison Sam Fisher style to aid in your escape. She arms you with a suppressed 9mm, a bottomless medpac and sends you on your way to indulge in excessive violence and mayhem. Wait a second, bottomless medpac? No, not a typo. Though it's not as much of an advantage as you'd expect. Your health bar is very small, about half the size of your armour. It only takes a couple of seconds to replenish and increases in small increments in tune with your heartbeat – a very nice touch. If you are under fire and run out of armour, more often than not, you won't get a chance to heal yourself. Enemy AI is crafty, cunning

and at times downright dirty. They take full advantage of the interactive environment, just as you can. See a table, then kick it over and use it for cover. Because if you don't, they will. They call for back up, surround you, flank you and tend to soak up a lot of rounds. We didn't mind though as *Cold Winter* boasts some of the most graphic, realistic and brutal kills out there. Pop a couple of rounds into a guard and watch the blood and limbs fly. Approach the body and you'll see a pool of blood, flies hovering over the corpse and several vital appendages missing. And that's just with a 9mm, wait until you see the carnage a shotgun or grenade launcher brings. You'll struggle not to unleash some Bond-like wit and cap a shotgun blast to the face with a droll, "Don't lose your head, pal."

Running out of supplies? Pad down dead guards for damaged armour, which increases your own, weapons and other assorted items. Pick up a strip of cloth, an empty bottle and a fuel can and boo-yah – instant Molotov cocktail. Add fuel to plasticine and an alarm clock and presto, instant fire bomb. These are just a few of the little touches that set *Cold Winter* apart from the hoards of first-person shooters out there. After the first ten minutes you'll be wincing at the kills, revelling in the mature tone, and trying to see which of the thirty-odd weapons can cause the most havoc with. It's just so cool it's criminal. **– Dave Kozicki**

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics **08** Tight, cut scenes have real cinematic feel

Sound **09** Tense, well balanced, sets the tone

Gameplay **09** Immensely enjoyable, controls so user friendly it's scary

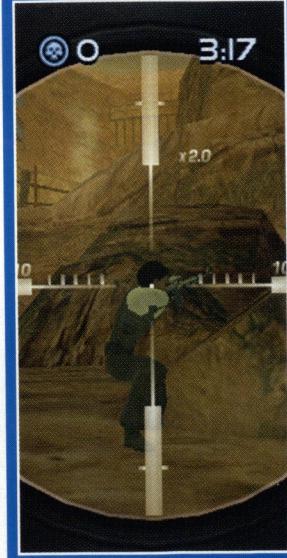
Lifespan **08** The longer you play, the more you'll want to

A superb first-person shooter that brings a lot of fresh ideas, a lot of blood and a lot of carnage. Definitely worth checking out.



GIMEE HEAD

While every first-person shooter nowadays has the obligatory multiplayer addition, *Cold Winter* gives you a twist. Sure Deathmatch, King of the Hill and Last Man Standing modes are stock standard, but we have never seen the likes of Head Match before. If you pull your mind out of the gutter for a second, this little gem plays like Capture the Flag, but substitute "flag" for "decapitated head" and you'll get the gist of it. As a bonus you can also use the head as a melee weapon! Nice!



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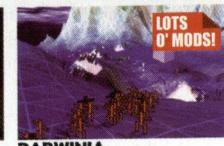
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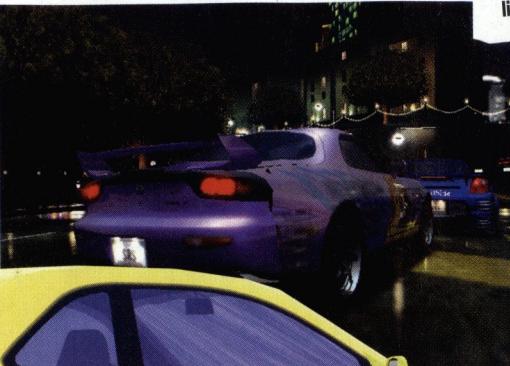
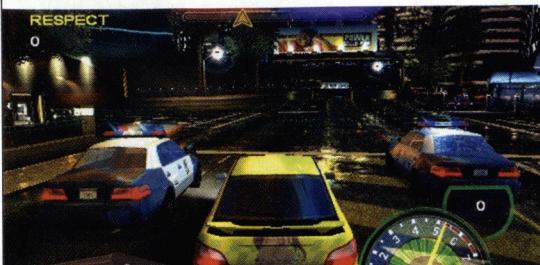
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Play-test



FUN FACT!

Want to go online and lose your car to somebody else? Yeah, we didn't think so but SRS allows racers to race for pinks just like in *Grease* – only without John Travolta and all the singing.



The car's Japanese text translates to something about ping-pong balls and Paul's sister.



X RACING

SRS: STREET RACING SYNDICATE

The other, other white meat...

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: ATARI

DEVELOPER: EUTECHNYX

PRICE: \$79.95

PLAYERS: 1-2 (ONLINE)

OUT: NOW

WEBSITE: WWW.SRSGAME.COM.AU

60Hz MODE: NO

WIDESCREEN: NO

SURROUND SOUND: NO

ONLINE: YES

BACK STORY

SRS was in danger of going down with its original publisher 3DO when it bit the big one. You may remember 3DO from such crimes against humanity as Jonny Moseley's Mad Trix, GoDai Elemental Force and anything starting with the words Army Men. 3DO kicked the bucket and Namco picked up the scraps for a cool 1.5 million. Namco released SRS in the US last August, but Atari is bringing it out here.

BETTER THAN

UMMM...

WORSE THAN

MIDNIGHT CLUB 3: DUB EDITION

LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

Some of the women are particularly hot – we like that

What they need to fix

Hot babes doesn't mean hot gameplay

At first we wanted to poke fun at SRS: Street Racing Syndicate for having a weird sounding title. Why use the acronym if the full name is going to appear right there beside it? *GTA: Grand Theft Auto* anyone? Then we discovered SRS actually stands for a few things. One of which is the Scoliosis Research Society, a non-profit organisation dedicated to education, research, and treatment of spinal deformity. We didn't want to make any jokes about that.

We'll just move on to the game itself – that is, after all, what you'd expect. We don't want to spoil the gist of the review to early, but SRS is in the unfortunate position of being in the same genre as *Midnight Club 3*, *Juiced* and *Need for Speed Underground 2*. It's unfortunate for two reasons. One, because the other three games we mentioned are very, very good. Two – SRS is not.

If there's one thing you can't neglect in a racer, it's speed. We've had bus rides faster than this. If the velocity of *Midnight Club 3* is akin to a kick in the jaw, the sensation of speed in SRS is like somebody breathing on your ear – only SRS won't make you horny. At least, not until you unlock a girlfriend (see 'Sex Appeal').

The cars feel stiff and stodgy and handle like rubbish. The garage boasts around 50 officially licensed cars from all the usual suspects, but once you take into account slightly different variations of the same model there's nowhere near that many. Stick to *Juiced* if you crave some Australian grunt, or *Midnight Club 3* if you want bikes and muscle – you won't find any of these in SRS. It's hard to get excited about the same old imports we've seen half a dozen times before. SRS also comes chock-full of licensed after-market parts to jam into your rice rocket, but even totally dedicated armchair tuners will be a little jaded once they leave the garage only to find out the rest of the game is completely uninspiring.

The sound isn't much better. SRS's generic sounding

cars are put to shame by its competition, and the eerie silence that ensues once you've engaged your nitrous is as confusing as Tristan's fascination with three-breasted women (give it up T-man, *Total Recall* was not based on a true story).

SRS divides up the 70 odd races over three cities: Los Angeles, Philadelphia and Miami. The events are spread across each map in the regular fashion, but you'll also be able to challenge random opponents as you encounter them. Win money, earn respect points – haven't we played this game before?

Each city is also dotted with coppers who'll bust you if they spot you disobeying the law, but don't get too excited – the police chases are a chore. Once the special meter reaches a certain point, the car will automatically stop and you'll be fined – regardless of the fact you may have just executed a perfect boomerang turn and accelerated a good 50 metres away from the pursuing fuzz.

If SRS had come out a few years ago we would've had far fewer issues with it. Suffering enormously from comparison to the current crop of quality street racers, SRS is second rate and instantly forgettable. '2 slow, 2 dubious' – don't bother. Both Namco and Atari are better than this, and they definitely don't need to be picking up 3DO's leftovers. **Luke Reilly**

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics 0/7 They lack some spark but they're mostly... agreeable

Sound 0/4 Tunes are ordinary and the effects aren't much better

Gameplay 0/3 Slow and sloppy – everything a good racer shouldn't be

Lifespan 0/4 You might stick it out if you want to pere at hotties

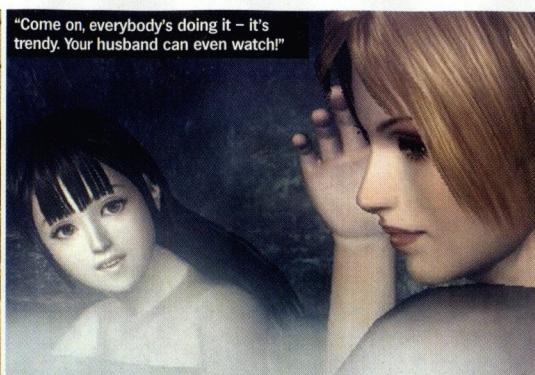
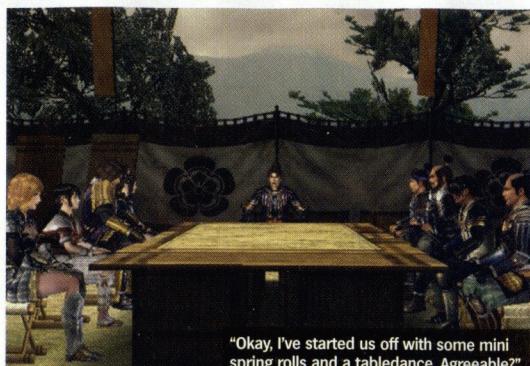
If *Midnight Club 3* is the new hotness, SRS is old and busted. It's miles behind the rest of the pack.



SEX APPEAL

Your car won't be the only thing you're tuning in SRS – you'll also need to impress the finer sex. To pull in SRS you'll need to build up your respect until a lovely lady makes herself the prize at the end of a specific challenge. If you're successful you can store her away in your private warehouse where she'll dance at your bidding. There are 18 lassies and 52 exotic videos to unlock (by the way, we said exotic – not erotic). The girl you're currently going steady with (the one that isn't locked up with the rest in the warehouse) will be your starter when racing. Unfortunately, it's perhaps the only unique thing about SRS. Courtney Day's our favourite – if she were a President she'd be Babe-raham Lincoln. Look at that heiney – we want to be friends with it.





STRATEGY

KESSEN III

Ancient Japanese battlefields run red with blood... and horse crap

SAY HELLO TO ALL MY LITTLE FRIENDS!

Like to see battles where heaps of enemies fly about the screen like rag dolls? Think one-on-one fights are for GIRLY MEN? Then *Kessen III* will quite possibly butter your muffin as it features screens brimming with combatants all dishing out a bit of the old ultra violence. It's spectacular, at least initially. And look at all those horses. This is probably the most horse-tastic PS2 title ever. If you're into that kind of thing...



STUFF HISTORY!

Certainly the REAL feudal Japan was unlikely to have battles that involved war beasts and control of the elements. But then, when it's fun, who cares about accuracy? Not us, dear readers, not us...



Like sushi or chicks with underarm hair, Koei's brand of strategy/action titles is an acquired taste. If you're the kind of guy that likes your action simple and bloody, with nary a speck of strategy to be employed beyond "should I lop this bloke's head or ARM off next?" then *Kessen III* is not for you.

If however you fancy yourself as something of an armchair general then perhaps a gander at this rather eclectic title is due.

Set during the "warring states" period in Japan's history, *Kessen III* plays like two games. One is kind of like a *Dynasty Warriors* style slash and hack and the other a real time strategy game.

This same mishmash of styles can be seen with the liberties Koei have taken with historical accuracy. Certainly the caper is based on historical fact, but it's sprinkled with so much magic, mysticism and characters wearing, frankly, rather fancy pants that you know you're not going to find these battles in any history books.

Don't be put off by the word "strategy", though. This isn't like one of those PC yawners where you have to change the undies of your soldiers or similar. Sure you'll control marching routes and which combatants you take into specific battles but beyond that it's fun stuff. Like customising weapons and outfitting bad-arse soldiers.

Once that foolishness is taken care of it's down to the messy business of battle. And, surprisingly, *Kessen III* really does deliver on the action. Taking command of entire hordes of troops (including grunts, cavalry, riflemen and ninjas) and lone officers when in Rampage mode you won't find yourself short of a blue.

This is great, but unfortunately what *Kessen III* has in quantity it doesn't necessarily match in variety. Sure the first fifteen times you send an army of well-armed troops against another is fun (and visually spectacular when you start unlocking elemental attacks and war beasts) but after a while the spectacle becomes a little stale and repetitive.

Don't get us wrong: you get value for your bucks here. With 50 stages of battle over 13 chapters (all rendered in 3D that ranges from good to downright beautiful), over 450 weapons (that can be customized for specific levels of arse-kickery) and a variety of environments (that do start to look a little repetitive after a while) you're not likely to finish *Kessen III* in an afternoon. In fact the problem is you'll probably get sick of it before you get to the end of it.

Perhaps the game's most puzzling aspect is its lack of online play or even multiplayer capabilities. Perhaps asking the PS2 to grind out two interactive armies is a bit much, but there's something slightly hollow about constantly fighting against the (admittedly quite smart) computer AI.

Overall *Kessen III* is a pretty-looking game that rarely slows down during soldier-clogged battles, which is impressive. Some of the colours are a trifle drab but that's a minor quibble. The sounds are nothing to write home about, but the orchestral score helps set the epic, historic tone. Whether you buy the game pretty much depends on your fascination with this period of Japanese history. It's a narrow niche market. But if you're tired of commanding troops in Middle Earth or telling aliens what to do, then *Kessen III* offers a sharp slice of something different, if unspectacular. **Anthony O'Connor**

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: THQ
DEVELOPER: KOEI
PRICE: \$99.95
PLAYERS: 1
OUT: NOW
WEBSITE: KOEI.COM/GAMES/INDEX.CFM
60HZ MODE: NO
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: NO
ONLINE: NO

BACK STORY

Koei has been responsible for some very interesting titles such as *Dynasty Warriors* that have successfully cornered the rather narrow games-set-in-feudal-Japan market. Their latest *Kessen* sequel offers more variety but will it be enough to win over a sceptical market?

BETTER THAN

THE LAST KESSEN AND MOST OTHER RTS TITLES

WORSE THAN

THE DYNASTY WARRIORS SERIES (THEY'RE JUST MORE FUN!)

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics **08** Nice models and little slow down. Impressive

Sound **07** Screams, slashes and pretty music. Nice

Gameplay **07** Fun for a while but tends to get repetitive

Lifespan **07** It's long but lack of variety will tire all but the hardest

A nice addition to a quirky series. It'll find favour with ardent RTS addicts, but it's also action-packed enough to be worth a rental for the casual war buff.



LAB TEST

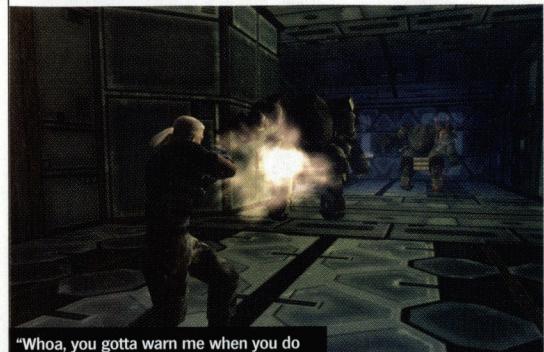
What they nailed this time

Large scale battles. They're pretty and, for a while, rock quite hard

What they need to fix

Online play or at least multiplayer, guys. Come on. Nothing's more fun than killing your friends... in a game, that is

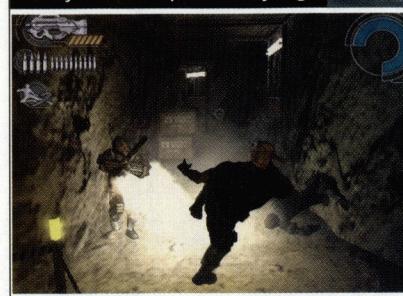
Play-test



"Whoa, you gotta warn me when you do that. My mouth was open and everything!"



We need to change that 0 on your shirt to a 6, baby



THIRD-PERSON SHOOTER

HOST IN THE SHELL - STAND ALONE COMPLEX

Casper? This ain't no friendly ghost!

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: ATARI

DEVELOPER: CAVIA INC.

PRICE: \$99.95

PLAYERS: 1

OUT: NOW

WEBSITE: WWW.GHOSTINTHESHELL-THEGAME.COM

60HZ MODE: NO

WIDESCREEN: NO

SURROUND SOUND: YES

ONLINE: YES

BACK STORY

Developer Cavia Inc. have a wide and diverse portfolio of games available. Besides Ghost in the Shell, they were behind Drakengard, Resident Evil: Dead Aim, and several Dragonball Z based titles. Being a Japanese company, anime was always going to be an obvious choice and inspiration for Ghost in the Shell.

BETTER THAN

ONI

WORSE THAN

PSI OPS : THE MINDGATE CONSPIRACY

LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

Hardcore heroism in the Trinity mould

What they need to fix

Mission variation and double jumps.

Learn from platformers!



he floats like a butterfly and stings like a bee, but this hardcore biatch ain't no Muhammad Ali. Her rank is Major. Her mission, to open up a can of whup-ass and lay the smacketh down upon anyone who looks at her sideways. Her name is Motoko Kusanagi and she is the latest spandex, tighter than her own skin, clad vixen on her way to kick buttocks and take names of any poor soul who gets in her way.

The scene is set in futuristic Newport City and you play several different members of a counter-terrorist squad, Section 9, who are up against a seemingly endless swarm of robots, cybernetic soldiers and snipers. We won't get too into the plot details because as with any anime production, understanding is of little importance. You just need to let it play out and enjoy the ride. You mainly control the Major, who is by far the most fun to play. At times you control Batou, her muscle bound hard-arsed partner, and a spider-like robot, Tachikoma, who comes with the most annoying and, typically anime, infantile voice in history.

After a short, optional tutorial you're off and running. The controls are comfortable, very quick to get accustomed to and, most of the time, work very smoothly. The only exception is when you try to perform a double jump, often used to get to the out-of-each areas. The second jump propels you backwards and becomes very frustrating over time. However, this is a minor annoyance as some of the other moves available verge on brilliant. Tapping **triangle** gives you an array of impressive evasion maneuvers. Graceful would be an understatement. The Major pulls off mid-air cartwheels, twisting front and back flips with distinctly feminine perfection time and time again. Unfortunately, the other playable characters lack the finesse of the Major, and while Batou's commando rolls look and feel authentic and Tachikoma's jumping abilities are effective, they leave you wanting a little more flash.

Overall the gameplay is fairly straightforward and almost feels like an RPG at times. For the most part, missions involve clearing the area of hostiles, locating a door or entrance, finding it locked, going to a terminal to unlock it and proceeding to the next save point. The learning curve is gradual, with the first real difficulty coming when you encounter snipers. These mothers are tough and can nail you from a long way away. Usually all you see is a laser sight and boom! Game over. They always get you with a headshot and the brutal death animation as your body slumps to the ground amongst a jumble of your scattered weapons is a real downer. An innovative way to deal with these situations is to hack into your enemies. Each unit you take out has a unique code you can access. Once you have it you can then take control of your enemies' bodies to open doors for you or to wipe out other members of their squad. Nothing's better than sniping half a squad and watching them try to take out their own man.

What makes *Ghost in the Shell* stand out is the real physics of movement, fluid motion, impressive hand-to-hand and exceptional sound. So good in fact that you can hear bullets ricochet, casings hit the ground, wind gusting and we swear we heard an ant fart once. You'll have to just give this one a go. **▲** **Dave Kozicki**

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics **07** Beautiful FMV sequences, backgrounds need a lift

Sound **09** Exceptional attention to detail

Gameplay **07** Accessible controls, dangerously addictive melee moves

Lifespan **06** Could probably knock this puppy out in a weekend

It's anime brought to life that looks so good it's gonna bust out of its shell and kick your ass.



I KNOW KUNG-FU

Find yourself out of bullets or too close to an enemy? Hit **triangle** repeatedly to perform a melee attack and enjoy the show. The screen frosts over while you deliver a lethal attack in slow motion. Each move varies, as does the camera angle. The ferocity of the attack is given an exclamation point as your blows are punctuated with a visual reverb in the form of several circular sonic booms. Try it...we guarantee you'll love it!





STRATEGY

SPY VS SPY

Is that an Ice Gun in your pocket or are you just glad to see me?

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR:	TAKE 2
DEVELOPER:	VIOIOUS CYCLE
PRICE:	\$29.95
PLAYERS:	1-4
OUT:	NOW
WEBSITE:	TAKE2GAMES.COM
60HZ MODE:	NO
WIDESCREEN:	NO
SURROUND SOUND:	NO
ONLINE:	YES



ith cartoonist Antonio Prohias seven years in his grave it seems a rather strange time to bring to life his famous black and white spies from the pages of MAD Magazine. It's not the first time these mortal enemies have taken digital form – as the old bastards among us will remember, the franchise was originally developed for 8-bit machines like the Commodore 64. One of the earliest split-screen games, it was equally addictive and frustrating.

As far as gameplay is concerned, not much has been changed for the PS2. There are more weapons and gadgets and three different modes to choose from, but the basic aim is still to collect hidden objects while blowing up, mowing down or smashing flat your opponents.

The question has to be asked: what does a third dimension add to a game like Spy Vs Spy? Much like the Worms franchise, the answer is very little, aside from more frustration in the controls department. Not being caught in your own bear trap gets easier as time goes on (much like learning to zip your fly when you're a kid) but too often you end up mashing buttons and hoping for the best.

When you come down to brass tacks, this is the same game that did the rounds nearly 20 years ago, given a few new bells and whistles (and trip mines). We reckon the real fun is in the Deathmatch mode, where all you're out to do is waste your buddies. Network compatible, it's just screaming to be adapted as a drinking game. **▲ Kris Ashton**

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics	05	Simple but clean and imaginative
Sound	05	Music will drive you bugshit in no time
Gameplay	04	Fun and frantic but controls are hit-and-miss
Lifespan	03	Lots of stuff to try out but gets old fairly quickly

Worth it if you want to recapture your misspent youth or just blow up some mates, but otherwise a bit of an anachronism.



SPORTS

MOTORCROSS MANIA 3

Take 2's freewheeling beat 'em up should get on its bike

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR:	TAKE 2
DEVELOPER:	DEIBUS STUDIOS
PRICE:	\$29.95
PLAYERS:	1-2
OUT:	NOW
WEBSITE:	TAKE2GAMES.COM
60HZ MODE:	NO
WIDESCREEN:	NO
SURROUND SOUND:	NO
ONLINE:	NO



et's face it: unless it's our head under the wheel (or football boot or ice hockey stick), sport goes better with violence. This is especially true of video games (where you don't have to deal with those pesky legal repercussions) and has been ever since the granddaddy of bloodsports, *Speedball*, came out 15 years back.

So here comes the third instalment of Take 2's *Motocross Mania* series, a sort of cross between *SSX Tricky* and *Tekken* (only nowhere near as good as either of those games, and certainly not in the same league as its rivals *MTX* and *MX*). The idea is to guide your dirtbike along increasingly maniacal tracks and perform stunts, all the while trying to bash your opponents off their rides. The more races you win, the more tracks, weapons and bike upgrades you will be entitled to.

Motocross Mania's graphics are excellent...for a PSone game. Blocky and not terribly detailed, they are in stark contrast to the animation, which while it doesn't make the PS2 groan with effort, is quite dynamic. The soundtrack has some decent hard rock, but the

voice acting and sound effects are more repetitive than James' excuses for not drinking beer.

Yeah, it's as dodgy as a John Howard election promise, but it is a bit of fun and has lots to explore and unlock – so if the price is right, *Motocross Mania 3* might just be worth considering. **▲ Kris Ashton**

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics	03	State-of-the-art – for the PSone
Sound	05	Nice soundtrack but slurs quickly get tiresome
Gameplay	05	Stripped back, no-frills stunt-fighting action
Lifespan	06	Difficulty modes and unlockables might hook you

A poor man's alternative to *MTX* or *SSX Tricky* – so if you're a poor man, you might want to check it out. **Maybe.**





INFO

Battle time

Star Wars: Battlefront II was announced at E3 and while we know about as much as Jar Jar Binks, we are able to tell you that the game will allow up to four players multiplayer, either cooperative or competitive, and the campaigns will be a little shorter than the PS2 sequel. The best news is that it's due out the same time as the PS2 sequel so you'll be able to whip out your lightsabre whether you're at home or not.



You're fired!

The hit TV show *The Apprentice* has got a meeting with the PSP. Mr Trump's title will see you take on corporate challenges, meetings with high-profile enterprises and of course the intense boardroom meeting that gets everyone's heart racing. Romance will also play a part so you'll finally be able to use the classic McBain line from *The Simpsons*: "I propose a new meeting... in bed". *The Apprentice* is pencilled in for a December release.



Hadukken!

One PSP title that's sure to get Nick as excited as kid at the circus is *Street Fighter Alpha*. Little is known about it so far but we've managed to wrestle a couple of details out of Capcom. We know that *SFA* will include WiFi fights and a brand new battle mode exclusive for the PSP. We can also tell you that *SFA* looks amazing and should pack quite a punch when it arrives here early next year.



The hunt is on

The stunning *Monster Hunter* is getting chopped down to size for Sony's handheld. The game will be based on the PS2's sequel, *Monster Hunter G*. So far it looks as stunning as its counterpart and the monsters are as scary as Naz without a coffee in the morning. Not much is known about the modes but we do know it will allow for up to four players ad-hoc multiplayer. *Monster Hunter* is expected to arrive when the PS2 sequel hits the shelves.

PSP NEWS

Everything that's happening in the world of PSP

Let the war begin

PSP gets the SEAL of approval

The hottest multiplayer game on the PS2 is set to become the hottest multiplayer game on the PSP. We can reveal that *SOCOM: US Navy SEALs Fireteam Bravo* will feature multiplayer through ad-hoc and WiFi. However while you'll be only controlling two SEALs rather than four, you'll still be able to form clans



with your comrades. The developers, Zipper, are also throwing in a feature so that you'll never play the same mission twice. Once a mission is complete, you'll be able to change some of the elements like mission objectives, where objects are based and where enemies are patrolling. This will allow you to tackle missions in



different ways over and over again. Plus, if you pick up a copy of *SOCOM 3* then you can plug your PSP into the PS2 via a USB cable and sync the data so that the events that take place in a mission on the PS2 will effect what happens on the PSP. *Fireteam Bravo* could spark a war for finest multiplayer on the PSP. However if it's anything like the PS2 incarnation then we've got our money on *SOCOM* coming out of it as the sole survivor.



Final Fantasy: Advent Children

The PSP's Final Fantasy? We assume not.

Just because the PSP's first *Final Fantasy* release isn't a game doesn't mean RPG pundits ought to be disappointed. Quite the opposite actually, as *Final Fantasy* devotees should be stoked about the 90 minute 'revisitation' to the beautiful world of *Final Fantasy VII*. Watching *Advent Children* is a little like watching one long cut-scene from a *Final Fantasy* game. Not that this is a bad thing – the production values are stratosphere-high, and the *Final Fantasy VII* crew that we've grown to

love are always a pleasure to watch.

A mysterious spreading illness is threatening the world and all the old *FFVII* cast come together again to battle the new risk. Set for release at the end of the year, we're holding our breath already – we just hope it doesn't take too long or we'll pass out.



GET A GRIP

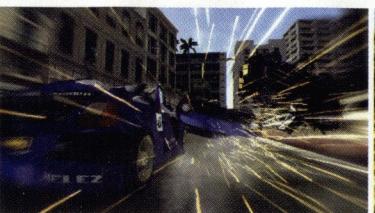
Puzzle-racer? What the hell?

Sidhe Interactive's bizarre puzzle-racer *Gripshift* was on display at E3 this year, proving there's a lot more to the Kiwi developer than just Rugby League games and sheep jokes.

Set on a series of crazy tracks, floating high above the ground, you'll need to negotiate loops, tight bends, jumps and all manner of obstacles to reach the end of each track. Botch a landing or take a bend a little too quick and you'll find it's a long drop to your demise. The best thing is if you get tired of the tracks you can just create your own with the track editor.

It's got all the addictive qualities of *Mercury* and its quick bursts of concentrated fun ought to make for a great handheld experience – not unlike Paul's own handheld experiences.





X RACING

BURNOUT LEGENDS

Honey, I shrunk the PS2's best racer

It's coming. It's coming. It's coming. That's not the sound of Phillip's late night shenanigans, but the crew at OPS2 Towers crying tears of joy after hearing *Burnout Legends* was coming to the PSP.

Picture this, *Burnout*, *Burnout 2* and *Burnout 3* looking as good as *Burnout 3* on the PS2. Nothing could be more sweet – well, except maybe a naked Jessica Simpson covered in honey (but we don't think God is hearing our prayers for that one). What's even better though is knowing that *Legends* will pack more features than Batman's utility belt. Expect to see all the classic modes like Pursuit, Burning Lap and of course, Road Rage. However Criterion is lubing us up for even more adrenalin-rushing racing satisfaction by adding a new mode known as Pursuit Rage. Think Road Rage with cop cars but even more intense than what Road Rage is already like. Plus if you're after 30 seconds of excitement that doesn't involve Luke, then Crash mode is where it'll be. Currently there are around 80

crash junctions that are just itching for you to turn into a flaming rubble. However Criterion is planning to pack even more in to Crash mode without sacrificing anything. WiFi will also a play key role in *Legends*. Every mode in *Legends* will feature multiplayer and if you want to unlock all the cars then you'll have to go head to head with a mate in order to do so.

With both *Burnout: Revenge* and *Burnout Legends* due out later this year, you shouldn't have any trouble getting your engine revving for some hardcore racing this year. **• PF**

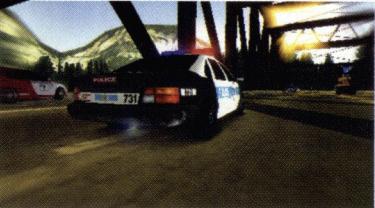


DETAILS

PLAYERS: 1-6

DISTRIBUTOR: EA

DEVELOPER: CRITERION



X PLATFORMER



DAXTER PSP

Finally the rat takes centre stage

Set before *Jak II*, *Daxter PSP* tells the story of how the ottsel came to rescue Jak from the evil Baron. Of course, Daxter being Daxter, he can sometimes get a little distracted like (Luke does whenever a guy in overalls walks past the office). So you'll also find yourself exploring Haven City and taking odd jobs from the locals just for a bit of extra fun. However all work and no play makes Daxter very sleepy. There'll be times when he just nods off into his own little world. Fortunately this world is playable, so you will get to play out all of Daxter's dreams, which are slightly less creepy than Tristan's.

Daxter's first solo gig sure looks

promising. Maybe if Ready At Dawn pulls *Daxter PSP* off, Jak might have to find himself a new sidekick. **• PF**



DETAILS

PLAYERS: 1

DISTRIBUTOR: SONY

DEVELOPER: READY AT DAWN



X ACTION



PURSUIT FORCE

Get the straightjackets, this one's crazy!

Insane is the only way to describe *Pursuit Force*. It combines the crazy speed of *Burnout 3* with spectacular car-to-car jumping antics, like we saw in *The Matrix: Reloaded*.

You'll star as a cop who wants to clean up the streets. However the only way he knows how to do this is by jumping on the hood of criminals' cars and blowing their brains out all over the dashboard. Hey, it works for us. You'll start a mission chasing down a perp while avoiding rush hour traffic. If you fail to do this though and your car starts looking like it needs a major service, then you can ditch it and

commandeer any other vehicle on the road. Once you get close to your target though, you'll have to jump out of your car again and onto the top of the criminal's car. Then it's just a matter of blasting your way in and taking the crook downtown.

The best part about *Pursuit Force* is that it's confirmed for a PAL release in Europe at this stage, so we should have our hands on this for launch. **• PF**

DETAILS

PLAYERS: 1-8

DISTRIBUTOR: SONY

DEVELOPER: BIG BIG STUDIOS



PSP-play



X FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER

CODED ARMS

Time to pop some caps

You could rack your brains for hours trying to figure out if Coded Arms has appeared on the PS2 before. Well we can tell you right now that it hasn't. Coded Arms is being developed exclusively for the PSP.

The single-player story is a sci-fi adventure where you play as a thief trying to hack into top-secret government files with the plan of cashing them in for some moolah. Naturally, anyone who gets in your way scores themselves a free funeral. However FPS's are all about multiplayer and that's where Coded Arms will blow you away.

It will feature up to four players blasting each other to bits with over 30 different types of weapons. There'll also be some classic matches like Capture the Flag, Keep the Mark and Last Man Standing available if you're looking for something a little more strategic than just the regular Deathmatch.

Coded Arms looks to utilise all of the PSP's power so get your itchy trigger fingers ready because this one's ready to blow! **APF**

DETAILS

PLAYERS: 1-4

DISTRIBUTOR: ATARI

DEVELOPER: KONAMI



X STRATEGY

THE SIMS 2

Have the world in the palm of your hands

The Sims universe has taken over most of the gaming world so why wouldn't it continue its invasion on the PSP?

The biggest difference to the PSP version of The Sims 2 is that you'll be in direct control of your sim and will only control him or her. You'll still have various tasks to manage but this time if you let things slip then the new sanity meter will increase and your sim will lose it.

The social system has also been reworked. In The Sims 2 every character will have a secret that you need to coax out of them. The system will act like a rhythm game. If the character shakes his left shoulder, hit left on the D-pad and so on.

The Sims 2 doesn't look like it'll be a simple port. It'll have a whole new system and a completely new story compared to the console version. The Sims, is there anything they can't do (aside from actually speak English)? **APF**

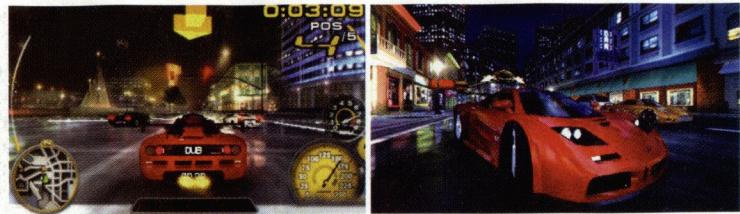


DETAILS

PLAYERS: 1-2

DISTRIBUTOR: EA

DEVELOPER: MAXIS



X RACING

MIDNIGHT CLUB 3: DUB EDITION

Roll up dem dubs and get ready to ride

We know you all love *Midnight Club 3* otherwise it wouldn't continually be in the top 10 of the sales charts. Based on this success, Rockstar are now bringing the entire game to the PSP and it promises to be as fast, open-ended and good looking as its PS2 counterpart.

The biggest PSP feature will be the multiplayer. MC3 will allow up to six players to duke it out in all three cities - Atlanta, San Diego and Detroit. All the cities will be laid out the same as the PS2 version. So if you already know them like the back of your hand then you'll no doubt have an edge on the competition.

More exclusive modes will be

announced soon so we'll keep our ears to the street and let you know what the word is when we get the low-down. **APF**



DETAILS

PLAYERS: 1-4

DISTRIBUTOR: TAKE 2

DEVELOPER: ROCKSTAR LEEDS



WIPEOUT PURE

The glory days of the PSone are back

Everyone remembers *Wipeout*. It was the fastest game on the planet before *Burnout* even had training wheels. Now it's coming back and it's ready to show the world how it's done.

Everything you remember about the original *Wipeout* games are back. The handling has been redesigned since the PS2 version and it is now a lot easier to steer and maintain control of your vehicle. Weapons are also back and to quote Will Smith, they're the bomb.

Something new and fresh though is Zone mode. You'll begin this mode on a track loaded with speed pads. You have to build up your boost in this section

because eventually you'll come to a part of the track where there's nothing but, er, track. You'll need to make it back to the pickup section of the track without, how do you say, exploding. The goal is to do as many laps as possible.

Wipeout Pure just seems to keep getting better and better. It's looking like a launch title for the PSP so it shouldn't be too long before you're addicted to this speed. **APF**

DETAILS

PLAYERS: 1-8

DISTRIBUTOR: SONY

DEVELOPER: SONY

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Playground

JUST FOR KIDS

HEROES IN A HALF-SHELL

The ninja amphibians are returning to PS2 again in what Konami is promising to be the most in-depth TMNT game to date. *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 3: Mutant Nightmare* will introduce a horde of new features including characters that evolve, a new experience point system, improved fighting control and more advanced multiplayer capabilities.

We were pleased to hear one of the suitably old-skool TMNT arcade games will be unlockable – but it wasn't mentioned which one. The emphasis this time around is on teamwork – story mode can be played with one to four players. Even when you don't have three mates nearby, the other turtles will be at your side, controlled through AI. All the turtles can participate in co-operative attacks to give your opponents a 'shell' of a thrashing.



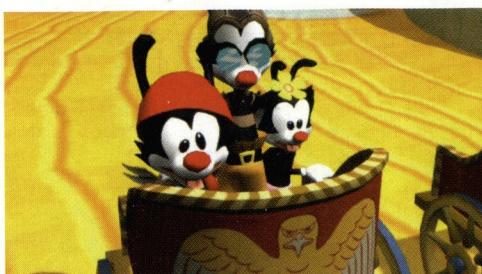
"WHERE'S MY SUPER SUIT?"

Mr Incredible and Frozone are returning in *The Incredibles: Rise of the Underminer*. Beginning where the film left off, the Underminer is threatening to destroy Metroville and it'll be up to Mr Incredible and Frozone to cut the diabolical genius down to size. *Rise of the Underminer* will feature co-operative gameplay with the ability to change characters at any point in the game, and as you advance through the game you'll upgrade your character's moves and abilities. It wasn't looking markedly different from the last *Incredibles* title, but we imagine that won't prevent interest from Pixar-inclined fans.



WHO LIVES IN A PINEAPPLE UNDER THE SEA?

The Nicktoons world is under attack. Professor Calamitous assembled together Plankton, Vlad, and Crocker to form a group known as The Evil Syndicate. Not very subtle, but it gets the point across. The Syndicate tears through Retroville, Amity Park, Dimmsdale, and Bikini Bottom in an attempt to take over the world. It's up to three whiny kids and a slightly dubious sea creature to stop them. Jimmy Neutron, Timmy, Danny, and SpongeBob SquarePants combine to take on The Evil Syndicate and take out the Doomsday device, which we assume is bad. *SpongeBob and Friends: Unite* will feature one-to-four-player co-op and more than 15 Nicktoons levels, including Retroville, Dimmsdale, Amity Park and Bikini Bottom.



PLATFOR

ANIMANIACS: THE GREAT EDGAR HUNT

"Pinky, are you pondering what I'm pondering?"

If you can finish the above quote with something along the lines of, "I think so Brain, but if Jimmy cracks corn and no-one cares – why does he do it?" – you're probably a little too old for *Animaniacs: The Great Edgar Hunt*. Although you may have fond memories of flicking it on after school a decade ago, *The Great Edgar Hunt* is probably more suited to people who haven't hit double digits yet.

Don't assume this is a bad thing, because in the scheme of kids' games you can do a lot worse. *Animaniacs* is colourful, kid-friendly and far more entertaining than 99% of the current crop of cartoons. It's no revolution, but it gets the basics right – and that's all you need for a good time.

You'll assume control of the Warner brothers Wakko and Yakk and the Warner sister Dot as you search five film sets for the missing Edgars (think of them like Oscars, only not



DETAILS

PLAYERS: 1

RELEASE DATE: JUNE

as boring). The Warner Film Lot will act as a hub for the hijinx, but you'll travel to the Wild West Set, the Spooky Movie Set, King O'Sullivan's Mine Set, the Once Upon A Time Set and the Epic Set. Each is filled with plenty of Hollywood-style spoofs that will no doubt go directly over your average viewer's head, but they're entertaining nonetheless. You'll also need to take on Pinky and the Brain in five themed minigames.

Kids may have problems with some of the blurry objectives but for the most part it should be smooth sailing. **▲ Luke Reilly**

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Easy to master, great music and plenty of fun, kids should go 'totally insane' for *Animaniacs*.



ADVENTURE

MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE HE-MAN: DEFENDER OF GRYSKULL

DETAILS

PLAYERS: 1

AVAILABLE: NOW



He-Man packs plenty of He-Action!

Pardon us if this review isn't quite as hilaarious as our usual fare. Pardon us if we seem a little down in the rhythmically rhyming gutter. Heck, forgive us if we seem just a little peeved. But it's been years since we've had a good fix of our favourite cartoon, *Masters of the Universe*. It was to us '80s crop what parents are to this current generation of ankle biters. It taught us important lessons like taking steroids is okay if they're administered from lightning bolts shot out of a mystical green castle, riding a green battle cat into war is the only way to be a true pussy master, the guys from metal group Manowar were cool, and battle-armour-wearing chicks called Teela are always going to be mega hot. We owe a lot to meathead He-Man, so it was with a big sigh of relief that we got

our hands on the *Masters of the Universe* game.

The graphics may not be up there with some of the bigger budget releases on PS2 but the simple level design makes it easy to plough through. Most of the levels involve searching around for keys to unlock the next section. Unfortunately the tricky controls combine with some tough platforming spots and boss confrontations to make it a little frustrating at times. With a bit of practise it can be mastered though. **▲ James Ellis**

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Overly tough in some places, but offers plenty of He-Fun for fans!



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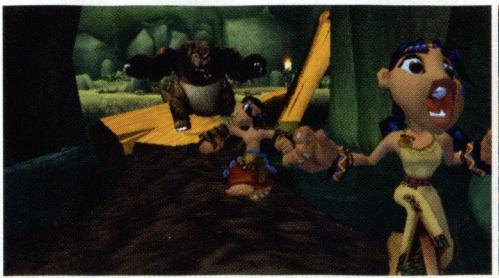
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ADVENTURE

BRAVE

No, he doesn't play baseball for Cleveland...

Set in a world based upon the mythology of Native America (before Columbus accidentally discovered it and proceeded to give everyone who lived there smallpox) *Brave* is the tale of a young Native American warrior. When *Brave*'s village is set upon by the evil Wendigo his friends are all captured. To save his tribe he needs to track down Spirit Dancer – the greatest Shaman who ever lived. Cue adventure.

To be honest, *Brave* is more entertaining than we anticipated. It's not on par with *Jak* or *Ratchet*, but it's clearly for the younger set. It is varied though – whether you're running through a forest of majestic Redwood trees or canoeing down raging white-water rapids, the changes of pace will keep players on their toes.

Brave will encounter enemies like giant bees, wolves, grizzly bears, cliff ogres and the Fallen warriors, powerful

skeletal warriors summoned by the Wendigo. He will also learn the ways of the Shaman, including mimicry, allowing him to possess animals by mentally transferring himself into their physical form – possessing the body of a rabbit will allow the lad to access tight areas and the body of a grizzly will make him a force to be reckoned with. *Brave* will also be able to summon the Spirit Eagle, who allows him to ride on his back.

It's cute, easy to pick up and while it's not a classic – it's probably a safe bet for the short-panted crowd. Just don't Sioux us if you don't like it... ▶ Luke Reilly

OFFICIAL VERDICT

There's not a lot here to engage the older lot, but you can do worse for a solid kids romp.



PLATFORMER

KAO THE KANGAROO ROUND 2

Much more fun than a night with Mike Tyson

Somehow the boxing kangaroo has become a symbol of Australia's fighting spirit even though it had more to do with animal cruelty than anything else. Anyway, the PS2 now has its own boxing kangaroo, Kao, a mean marsupial who originally appeared on PC and Dreamcast a few years back.

Reactions back then were along the lines of, "It's very pretty but we've seen it all before" – and that's a pretty good summation of *Round 2*. Run around collecting coins, punch out enemies, try to land on platforms without falling in the water and solve the odd puzzle here and there. Seasoned platformers will know the drill and most – especially the younger ones – will probably fall in love anyway.

And like Anna Nicole Smith, there's plenty to love. With five worlds and twenty levels, you'll still punch in plenty of hours even though the gameplay is lethally easy and the controls are simple to master. What really makes *Kao The Kangaroo* appealing is the characters – cute, well rendered and memorable (although sometimes it's hard to tell friend from foe – the kind firefly and the nasty hornets look very similar). If it falls in any area it's the voice acting, with annoying accents and repetition sure to bug players ("Help me Kao!"). ▶ Kris Ashton

OFFICIAL VERDICT

It's not a knockout punch but Kao certainly has the charm to make you go the full 12 rounds.



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BLADE: TRINITY

Director: David S. Goyer **Writer:** David S. Goyer **Starring:** Wesley Snipes, Kris Kristofferson, Jessica Biel, Dominic Purcell, Ryan Reynolds, Parker Posey, Triple H **Rating:** MA15+



FILM: If you didn't like the previous *Blade* films, you're asking a little too much if you think *Blade: Trinity* is going to rock your world. *Blade: Trinity* isn't made for people who don't like *Blade*; it's made for those who do. Admittedly, it's not *Gone With The Wind*, and it's definitely not going down in the annals as one of the defining films of our generation. This isn't a deep or challenging flick, it's just two hours of popcorn fodder.

Wesley Snipes returns as part man, part vampire, all badass vampire hunter. After many years of smiting the undead he's fallen befool of the FBI. Whistler (Kristofferson) sets Blade up with The Nightstalkers, a posse of vampire hunters including Abigail (Biel) and Hannibal King (Reynolds). Reynolds is

by far the best addition to *Blade: Trinity*, injecting comedy into the action like a second-tier Owen Wilson.

The action is thick and fast, relying more on dazzling choreography than dud CGI like *Blade II*. The problem is there are times where Blade seems to take a backseat to his new hombres, and the host of new villains Goyer has thrown in are extraordinarily uninteresting. You'll probably come out of it and not recall a single one of their names, except Dracula (Purcell) whose performance really ought to have been cranked up a few notches, mind you. It's a noticeable shift from *Blade* and *Blade II*, but although it's not remarkable in any sense it's entertaining nonetheless. By the way, if you can't stand comic book adaptations, take about five marks of the score. **7/10**

EXTRAS: Two commentaries, neither

featuring Snipes, and a doco almost as long as the film itself should keep die-hards amused, an alternate ending and blooper reel plus a smattering of others. None of it really warrants repeat viewing but it's a good package. **6/10**

VERDICT: A little hit and miss, but not every film needs to be rocket surgery. A satisfying ride. **LR**



"Come on in – my parents are out"



HEEL BOY!

WWE fave Triple H (left, about to snog a Pomeranian) makes his first token bad guy appearance in *Blade: Trinity*. He beats the crap out of Reynolds (who spent a lot of time icing his bruises after shooting) but his cooking doesn't quite measure up to The Rock.

STEAMBOY

Director: Katsuhiro Otomo **Writer:** Sadayuki Mural, Katsuhiro Otomo **Starring:** Robin Atkin Downes Alfred Molina Patrick Stewart **Rating:** PG



FILM: A teenager who inherits a kick ass invention called the Steamball must protect it from some bad asses called the Federation, who want to create weapons of mass destruction with it. It's kind of a crappy story but *Steamboy* pulls it off with its awesome animation. **7/10**

EXTRAS: A couple of featurerettes, production art but otherwise the features are about as lacking as Phil in the pants department – apparently it's an optical illusion. **3/10**

VERDICT: If you're down with anime then definitely get your hands on these steamy balls. You won't regret it. **PF**

HOUSE OF FLYING DAGGERS

Director: Yimou Zhang **Writer:** Feng Li, Bin Wang **Starring:** Takeshi Kaneshiro, Andy Lau, Ziyi Zhang **Rating:** M15



FILM: A copper helps a young dancer escape an evil organization known as The House of The Flying Daggers. However as always, nothing is as it seems. You will never see another action film like this. It's more visually stunning and action packed than anything Jerry Bruckheimer or Michael Bay have ever done in their

entire careers. **8/10**

EXTRAS: The making of documentary is the only decent feature on the entire second disc. Unless you like pretty pictures you probably shouldn't bother. **2/10**

VERDICT: A must see movie. It's even been dubbed in English so you don't miss all the hotties while you're reading the subtitles. Bonus. **PF**

DECK DOGZ

Director: Steve Pasvolski **Writer:** Steve Pasvolski **Starring:** Tony Hawk, Sean Kennedy, Richard Wilson **Rating:** M15

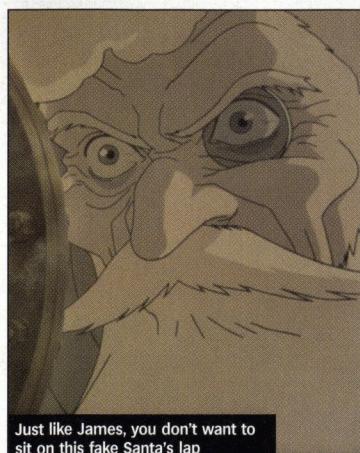


FILM: Three skaters try to get sponsorship from Tony Hawk by winning a nationwide competition. Although getting to the competition is an uphill battle as they have to avoid cops, drug dealers and parents. It's your typical underdog story but given a slick MTV makeover. Unfortunately the acting is

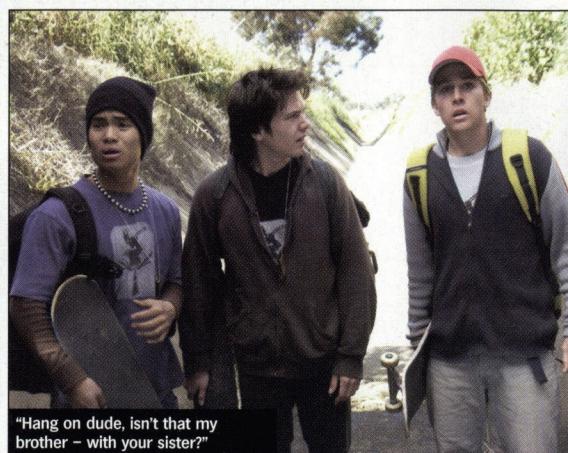
about as good as a sock puppet. **6/10**

EXTRAS: There's a making of documentary, trailer, Hawk video and a pretty handy skater dictionary that tells you what the hell the kids are saying. **6/10**

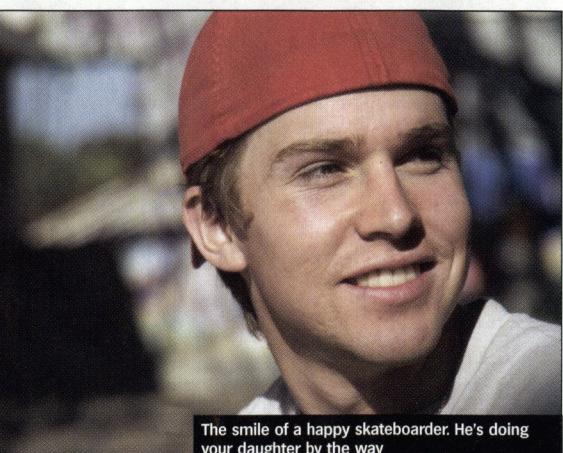
VERDICT: Even though it's a little rough around the edges it's still worth watching if you're into ollies and half pipes. **PF**



Just like James, you don't want to sit on this fake Santa's lap



"Hang on dude, isn't that my brother – with your sister?"



The smile of a happy skateboarder. He's doing your daughter by the way

I-BEAD 400

Manufacturer: I-Bead Available: Now Price: \$399

The best thing about the i-Bead 400 is that it opens up a world of naughty fun for you and a friend. Anytime you want, you and a friend can both whip out your plugs and stick them into some seriously sexy hardware. By 'plugs' of course we mean headphones and by 'hardware' we mean the i-Bead 400. That's right, this nifty little MP3 player has two headphones jacks, so two people can rock on at the same time. On top of the two-player thrills, the i-Bead comes packing a 1GB hard drive that can store up to 500 tracks (32 hours of music). Still not impressed? How about its FM radio tuner and the ability to record from the radio or from its built-in microphone? You can even use the i-Bead as a removable hard drive for both Macs and PCs to store any data you want. The i-Bead 400 – is there anything it can't do? **9/10 NP**



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- PS00334 **Delta Goodrem** A Little Too Late
- PS00339 **Shakaya** Are You Ready
- PS00321 **Good Charlotte** Chronicles of Life and Death
- PS00310 **Snoop Dogg** Signs
- PS00095 **Will Smith** Switch
- PS00333 **Rob Thomas** Lonely No More
- PS00073 **Mario** Let Me Love You
- PS00335 **Missy Higgins** The Special Two EP
- PS00308 **Destiny's Child** Girl
- PS00303 **Sunset Strippers** Falling Star
- PS00332 **The Gorillaz** Feel Good Inc

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- PS00100 **Destiny's Child** Jumpin Jumpin
- PS00091 **Jesse McCartney** Beautiful Soul
- PS00312 **Kelly Clarkson** Behind Hazel Eyes
- PS00320 **Black Eyed Peas** Don't Phunk With My Heart
- PS00331 **Moustache** Everywhere
- PS61018
- PS61022
- PS60559
- PS60502
- PS61028
- PS60187

3 SMS to 19 19 33
"PS ROCK"

Poly only service

- PS00092 **Kid Courageous** Is She Really Going Out With Him?
- PS00349 **The Killers** Somebody Told Me
- PS00242 **Coldplay** Yellow
- PS00234 **Jet** Look What You've Done
- PS00358 **Butterfingers** Yo Mama
- PS00357 **Modest Mouse** Float On
- PS00344 **The Streets** Fit But You Know It
- PS00354 **Ben Lee** Gamble Everything On Love
- PS00346 **Missy Higgins** Scar
- PS00347 **Evermore** It's Too Late
- PS00356 **Powderfinger** Bless My Soul
- PS00352 **John Butler Trio** Something's Gotta Give

4 SMS to 19 19 33
"PS RAP MIX"

Poly and Wallpaper service

- PS00045 **Ciara** 12 Step
- PS00179 **Brandy** Afrodisiac
- PS00085 **50 Cent** Candy Shop
- PS00125 **Suga Suga** Baby Bash
- PS00119 **Nelly f. Kelly Rowland** Dilemma



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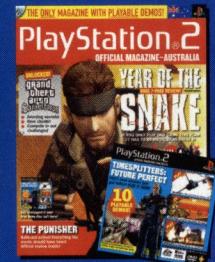
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OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN PLAYSTATION 2 MAGAZINE DELIVERED TO YOUR DOOR FOR LESS!

WHAT IS RE-PLAY?

This section will breathe new life into your old games. Each month we'll show you amazing things to find or set challenges for you to take up against us. We also welcome input from you. Write in and tell us if you've found something cool that you'd like to share with the other readers. Even if you haven't found anything yourself, write in and tell us what game you'd like to get more out of and we'll do the searching for you. Email us at OPS2@derwenthoward.com.au or send it the old-fashioned way to PO Box 1037, Bondi Junction, NSW 1355.

There's nothing worse than shelling out the big bucks on a game you play for a few weeks before it falls behind the TV. We've been digging around the games room looking for any old gems we can temporarily resurrect for you lot, and your own secrets and challenges have been great so far. Keep them coming people!

Be sure to check out our official challenges too. Record on videotape or photograph your best efforts and send them in to PO Box 1037, Bondi Junction, NSW, 1355, marked "OPS2 Challenges". We'll print the top results in future issues. The two highest scores in both of the official challenges will win the game of the month, so go nuts!

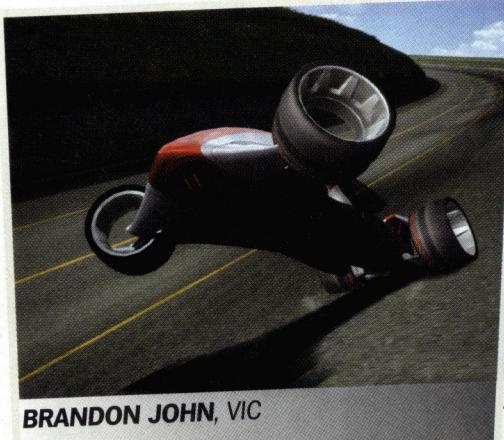


PHOTOGENIC!

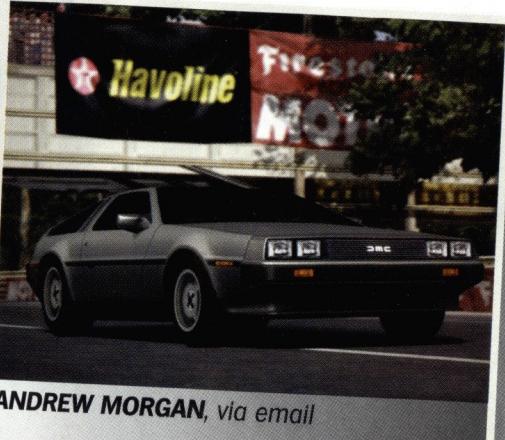
GRAN TURISMO 4

OPS2 readers' favourite rides

We've had plenty of OPS2 readers sending in snaps from GT4's Photo Mode, which shows us there's a lot more people out there clicking away than we first thought there would be. Some of them were pretty impressive too, so we've printed the best here for posterity. These ought to go straight to the pool room!



BRANDON JOHN, VIC



ANDREW MORGAN, via email



SIMON KENT, QLD



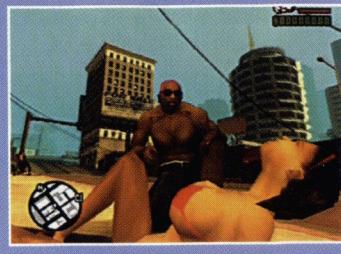
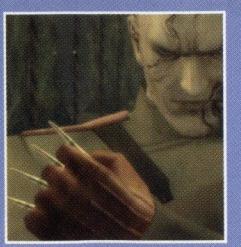
JOSH CHATWIN, via email

ONLY IN SAN ANDREAS

Where else but the wonderful world of GTA San Andreas could you see a beautiful buxom brunette basking on the footpath? Look at those jubbies; we want to be friends with them. San Andreas – it's not just a place, it's a state of mind.

BOSSY!

When fighting Volgin at the end of *Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater*, put on the Raiden mask. At first he'll be confused, but once he works out that you're trying to deceive him he'll attack and hit you like a tonne of bricks. Also, if you've got some Russian Glowcaps, throw them towards him – when Volgin uses his electrical attack the charge will be drawn towards them instead of you.



THAT'S COOL!

Open the OPS2 vault and try out our challenges and hidden bonuses!



OFFICIAL CHALLENGE

With SingStar Pop just around the corner, OPS2 Towers is alive with the sound of music. We thought it would be apt to set a challenge that will test our more vocally-gifted readers. Bust out your copies of SingStar Party, dust off those microphones and have a glass of water. Select Maroon 5 – This Love, full length and set it on medium so everyone's on a level playing field. Send in a picture or recording of your top score screen to the usual address and you'll have a shot at being the best singing OPS2 reader. Anybody who made it onto *Australian Idol* is ineligible to enter – Shannon, put the microphone down...



WINNERS

We've had a horde of entries this month. We're going to encourage more girls to enter from now on; our female readers seem to have really neat handwriting. WA reader Jackie Ayers has beautiful writing (and to answer your questions, the next cool racing game to look out for would be *Burnout 4* or *Most Wanted*, and yes, some of us are single. Keep trying guys!

MAY CHALLENGE – NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND 2 COLOSSAL DRIFT TOTAL

mam-moth (n)

1. a large extinct elephant that had long curved tusks and was covered with hair. Genus: *Mammuthus*.
2. something that is a particularly large example of its kind.
3. drift scores this big! (adj)

tion	SCORE:	1,461,775
	BEST DRIFT SCORE:	52,510
	LONGEST DRIFT:	18.70
	TOP SPEED:	132.2 km/h

MAY CHALLENGE 1 – GRAN TURISMO 4 GOLDEN LAP

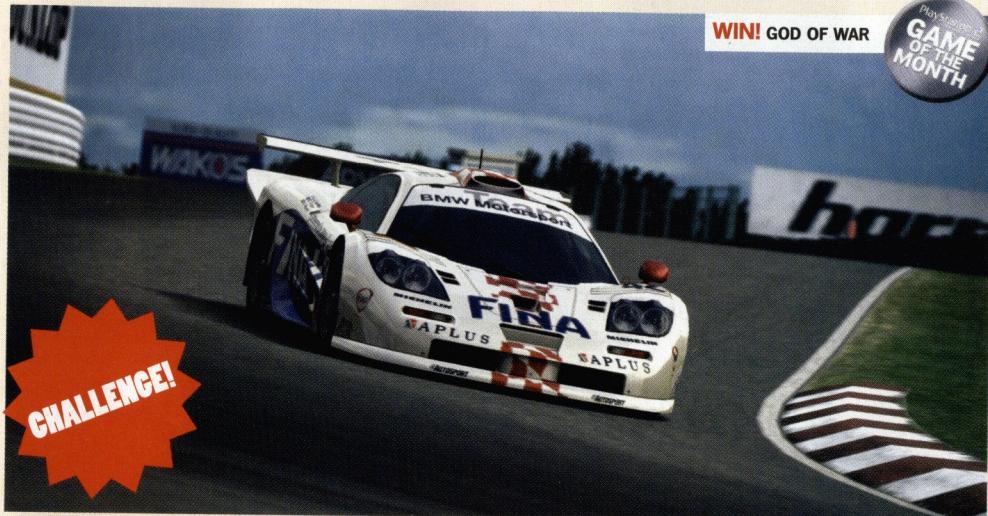
gold-en (adj)

1. with the deep rich yellow colour or sheen of gold.
2. made largely or wholly of gold.
3. when there is general success, happiness, or prosperity.
4. especially good GT4 lap times like these!



OFFICIAL READER CHALLENGE

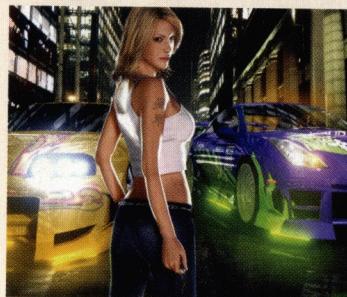
Simon Kent from Queensland slipped this *Gran Turismo 4* challenge to us. It's a challenge that'll test the very limits of your car – just how fast can you go? Head to the Machine Test and try the max speed test. You're going to need to find the right car, the right settings and spend some quality time on the track to squeeze every single kilometre per hour out of it. We've spent enough quality time with GT4 to know the top ranges of GT4's fastest rides, so no cheating shenanigans okay? In the event of a tie, we'll pick a winner at random. That's how we roll...



WIN! GOD OF WAR



READER CHALLENGES



BRYDAN DOWNS, NZ

Try to get 2000 hydraulic points in *Need for Speed: Underground 2*!

MADDEJK – OPS2 FORUM

Who can beat Muhammad Ali in *Fight Night 2004* in just 4 rounds? (in career)



DJNATOLS – OPS2 FORUM

Try Devil May Cry 3 on 'Dante Must Die' Difficulty.

It's totally insane.

('Dante Must Die' gets unlocked when you complete Hard mode)

MATT BULTER, QLD

My maximum insane jump length in *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas* is 1876 metres. Can anyone come anywhere near that distance?

CODE-U-LIKE

Need to cheat your way to victory on a certain game? Here are the codes you should use.

STAR WARS EPISODE III: REVENGE OF THE SITH



Go into settings, then Codes, to unlock these features:

NARSHADAA

All bonus missions unlocked

AYLASECURA

All concept art unlocked

TANTIVEIV

All duel arenas unlocked

ZABRAK

All duelists unlocked

JAINA

All Jedi powers and Force moves

COMLINK

All movie clips unlocked

BELSAVIS

Fast regeneration of Force & health

KORRIBAN

Story missions unlocked

SUPERSABERS

Super Sabre mode

071779

Tiny droid mode

KAIBURR

Unlimited Force

XUCPHRA

Unlimited health

MIDNIGHT CLUB 3: DUB EDITION

Go to options, then select Codes to unlock these hot items:

kubmir

+\$ to career money

rimbuk

-\$ from career money

getheadl

Bunny ears

haveyouseenthisboy
Chrome body

trythisathome
Flaming head

ontheroad
No damage

getheadk
Pumpkin heads

getheadn
Skull head



getheadm
Snowman head

dfens
Special move agro

Rjnr
Special move roar

allin
Special move zone

roadtrip
Unlock all cities

getheadj
Yellow smile

LEGO STAR WARS



Unlocking the "?" door

To unlock the "?" door found at the episode selection room, you have to get True Jedi Status in every level. That is 6 in Episode 1, 5 in Episode 2, and 6 in Episode 3.

Spell "LEGO" to get a massive amount of studs

In the "A New Hope" level, look for a room with yellow, blue, green, and red blocks. If you manipulate these blocks to spell out LEGO by using the Force then a massive amount of blue studs will rain down from the ceiling after a moment's pause.

PLAYBOY: THE MANSION



Nude cheat

At the title screen hit **□, X, X, □, □, □, □, □, □, □** to get everyone's gear off.

MX VS ATV UNLEASHED

Enter the password to unlock the following

BROKEASAJOKE

1,000,000 points

HUCKIT

All freestyle tracks

WARDROBE

All gear

LEADFOOT

All machines

WANNABE

All riders

TOOLAZY

Unlock everything

MINIMOTO

Unlocks 50cc bikes

AREA 51

Upgrading The Alien Grenade

In the stage Life or Death, there is a small key on a dead soldier in the damaged lift where Cole starts the stage off at. Grab it to open the small lockers in the stage. One of the small lockers in the first power conduit pit has a databank item that upgrades the alien grenade [it now homes in on enemies].

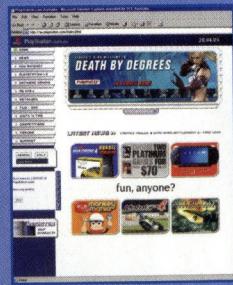
View in game cut-scenes in Mutant Vision

Right before you are about to experience an in game cut-scene push up on D-pad to change into mutant form and then activate the cut-scene.

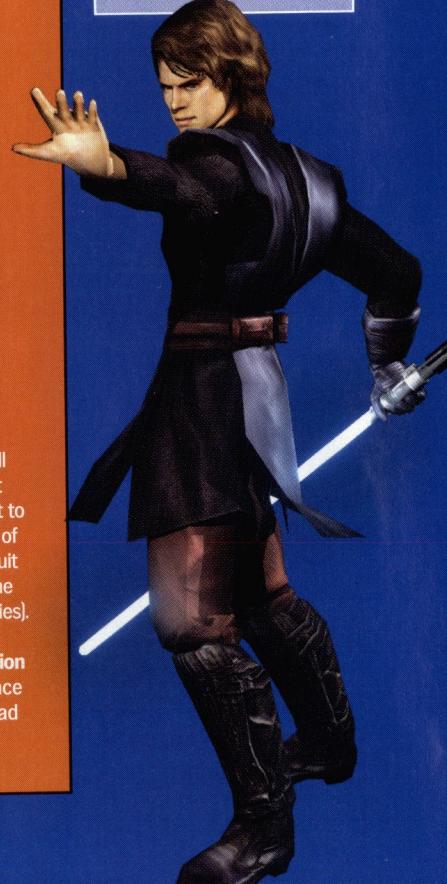
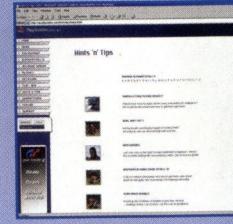
ULTIMATE CHEAT SITE

 PlayStation.com.au

HEAD ON OVER TO
HTTP://AU.PLAYSTATION.COM/
TO GET THE ULTIMATE CHEAT FIX.
YOU'LL NEED TO REGISTER WITH
THE SITE (BUT IT'S FREE AND EASY
TO DO) THEN YOU'LL HAVE FULL
ACCESS TO ALL THE CHEATS.



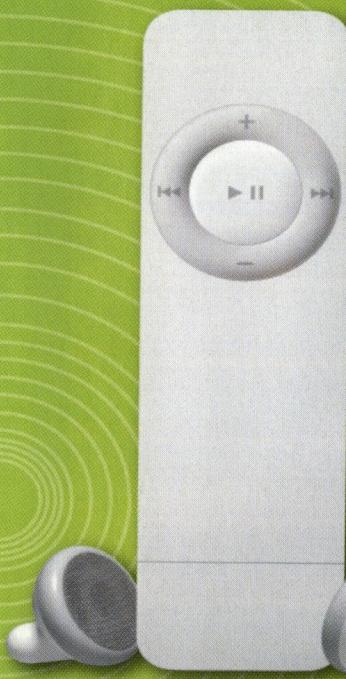
HERE'S A SAMPLE OF THE HUGE
CHEATS DATABASE



Win instantly

50

iPod shuffles
up for grabs!



Check out
MTV screen
July issue for
details

The cover of the July issue of MTV Screen Australia magazine. The cover features a large photo of Pamela Anderson. Headlines include "MASSIVE!" and "Extreme sports fashion pullout + hot shoe buyers' guide!". It also features a photo of Jesse McCartney and a "TRL" section. A small inset at the bottom left lists "Beauty Shop", "Koolism", "Morcheeba", "Hot skate gear", "Black Eyed Peas", and "Coldplay" with a "+ MORE!" button. A small graphic in the top right corner says "EXCLUSIVE! WHITE STRIPES POSTER! CD REVIEW!" with a photo of the White Stripes. The word "Paris" is written in large, stylized letters across the bottom right of the cover.

Issue on sale June!

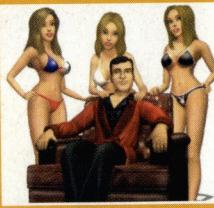
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Just got your PS2? Looking for the a safe bet to blow your hard-earned on? OPS2's GameStation is your best resource for finding top quality PS2 games. Some might be a little long in the tooth, but you'll probably be able to pick them up second-hand. Others are quite recent or Platinum titles, so finding them won't be a hassle. All are 100% guaranteed to satisfy.

TOP 5 DIGITISED CELEBRITIES

HUGH HEFNER

Every man on the planet wants to be Hugh Hefner. It's science. We all want to be surrounded by buxom beauties wearing next to nothing while being the world's most hard hitting journalist. It's not easy being in Hef's shoes. It's hard work. Very hard work.



TONY HAWK

Hawk didn't become famous for doing a bunch of tricks, he became famous for his adrenaline rushing games. After Pro Skater hit the scene, car parks everywhere were littered with teens scraping their knees and breaking their bones.



SNOOP DOGG

Snoop was an unlockable for True Crime but all he did was cruise around town looking for bones, and not the kind of bones Luke searches for on a Saturday night either.



SHANNON ELIZABETH

We would have loved to have been working on Everything or Nothing just so we could scan Shannon Elizabeth. We would have scanned her all night long.



HOMER SIMPSON

Apparently Homer was hard to work with. He said he had to have cool cars and boobs bigger than Paul. As you can see, he got his wish. Ouch.



AMPLITUDE

What makes it great: With diverse tracks, Amplitude is a music lover's dream. And the more rhythm games that don't involve lurching around can only be a good thing too.

AREA 51

What makes it great: Area 51 is a very cool little game and well worth a look for FPS shooters and twitchy loners who believe the truth is out there.

ATV: OFFROAD FURY 2

What makes it great: Extends on the awesome original with new riders and tracks, and plenty of countryside to tear up.

BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL

What makes it great: The fusion of a third-person adventure game with a deep and lengthy RPG model. Cute without being saccharine and complex without being confusing.

BROTHERS IN ARMS: ROAD TO HILL 30

What makes it great: An excellent game in a crowded market. A distinctly more mature take on war featuring levels of blood, foul language and sheer desperation not seen before.

BURNOUT 3: TAKEDOWN

What makes it great: It's eye-meltingly spunky and so fast you'll won't be able to blink. Stop looking for an arcade racer that's more fun than Burnout 3 – you won't find one.

COLIN MCRAE RALLY 2005

What makes it great: WRC 4 has trumped it but Colin still has great damage modelling, slick handling and a roster of modern monsters and historical rally beasts.

DEUS EX: THE CONSPIRACY

What makes it great: Deus Ex is the first ever FPS where the solution to your problems isn't always to go guns blazing. Instead, it combines elements of RPG and strategy that force you to use creativity and lateral thinking to get through.

DEVIL MAY CRY 3: DANTE'S AWAKENING

What makes it great: This is the Devil May Cry you remember – stunning design, visuals, effects and presentation. It's a work of art so grab it or you'll be the one crying.

DRIV3R

What makes it great: Astonishing damage and brilliant driving physics. Screaming through cities in hulking muscle cars or 18-wheelers, Driv3r is every great Hollywood car chase crammed into one game.

ESPN NBA 2K5

What makes it great: Slick presentation, great graphics and innovative modes allows ESPN NBA 2K5 to slam-dunk the competition

ESPN NFL 2K5

What makes it great: If every game had the attention to detail this puppy had this list would be a helluva lot longer. Awesome broadcast-style presentation, great graphics and deep gameplay.

ESPN NHL 2K5

What makes it great: We'll be pucked if you can find a better game of ice hockey for the price of ESPN NHL 2K5. Deep and rewarding, improved fighting controls and sexy visuals

EYETOY: PLAY 2

What makes it great: Do we need to explain? The innovation and introduction of the video camera to gaming is brilliant. It's just one reason why the PS2 is so cutting edge.

FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 2

What makes it great: All the strategy, violence and glitz thrills of boxing minus the brain damaging concussions. If it were a boxer it would rightly quip, "I am the greatest".

FINAL FANTASY X

What makes it great: This was one of the first games on the PS2 to really try and stretch the machine's graphics capabilities to the limit. The result is simply breathtaking.

FREEDOM FIGHTERS

What makes it great: For the first time ever, commanding squads and third-person shooting is so easy you won't even notice you're doing it. If you don't have it – find it.

FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR

What makes it great: The bomb for strategy nuts, intense street skirmishes and ultra-realistic gameplay based on authentic military tactics. It may be a bit too dull for some however.

THE GETAWAY

What makes it great: No coin collection, no magic bonuses, just a whole lot of gritty crime action set in a tough old city. Swearing, violence and not a shred of political correctness...

THE GETAWAY: BLACK MONDAY

What makes it great: A totally cinematic and engaging experience let down by too few gameplay improvements. It's like a potty-mouthed version of The Bill.

GRAND THEFT AUTO III

What makes it great: Revolutionary, open-ended gameplay that spawned many an imitator, GTAIII is a not only a watershed for the PS2 – it has changed games forever.

GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY

What makes it great: Takes everything great about GTAIII, adds countless extra features and paints it in '80s pastel colours. This game does almost nothing wrong.

GRAND THEFT AUTO: SAN ANDREAS

What makes it great: This is the greatest videogame ever made. Run, drive, fly, swim, boat, cycle, ride or even skydive you way through a whole state of mayhem. It's beyond debate – this is gaming perfection.

GRAN TURISMO 3: A SPEC

What makes it great: The ultimate realism of the 150+ cars – each made up of more than 4000 polygons – made GT3 THE racing sim. That was, until GT4 of course.

GRAN TURISMO 4

What makes it great: The biggest, most authentic and most realistic racing simulator ever. 700 unique cars from 1886 to 2005 that handle exactly like their real-world counterparts. It's a car nut's wet dream.

HITMAN 2: SILENT ASSASSIN

What makes it great: It's ethically dubious but there's no doubt about how good Silent Assassin is. Multiple solutions, fantastic rag-doll physics and enough atmosphere to choke a horse.

HITMAN: CONTRACTS

What makes it great: Doesn't really flow as well as Silent Assassin did, but retains the multiple solutions, an arsenal of weapons, an award winning score and great level design. Tense and uncompromising.

ICO

What makes it great: The dreamy-looking, wonderfully peaceful puzzling adventure game play, along with an entirely unique feel make people fall in love with Ico. Experience it for yourself!

JAK AND DAXTER

What makes it great: It features large sprawling lands where the weather changes as often as it does in Sydney, hundreds of fun mini-games, challenges and missions. Wicked.

JAK II: RENEGADE

What makes it great: Infusing GTA-style game play into the Jak & Daxter world has made this the first platformer that appeals to both infants and adults alike.

JAK 3

What makes it great: Rounds out the trilogy in style – Jak's evolution from pixie-eared pancy to platforming badass is complete. Great mix of genres that'll keep you on your toes to the end.

JAMES BOND: EVERYTHING OR NOTHING

What makes it great: The change to a third-person perspective allowed Bond's shooting, car chasing and fighting to be brought together in the first game that really feels like a Bond movie.

JUICED

What makes it great: It can't match Midnight Club 3 for thrills, but it boasts a far more impressive stable for than NFSU2. Not revolutionary, but a solid racer for hardcore rev-heads.

KELLY SLATER'S PRO SURFER

What makes it great: A souped-up version of the Tony Hawk games on water, with a wave-hunting adventure to tie it all together. The best surfing title by a long way.

KILLZONE

What makes it great: Some of the best weapons and reload animations on PS2, atmospheric battle zones and brilliant character design, just a little sloppy around the edges.

KINGDOM HEARTS

What makes it great: In spite of the Disney characters and settings that make it seem just for kids, Kingdom Hearts poses a surprisingly difficult yet rewarding challenge for RPG fans.

LEGO STAR WARS

What makes it great: Parents should buy LEGO Star Wars for their kids, no matter how old they are. It's the most fun we've had pushing coloured blocks around since Tetris.

LORD OF THE RINGS: RETURN OF THE KING

What makes it great: Gorgeous and packed to the gills with sword-swinging action, it's as close as it gets to being in the movie without having to go to New Zealand.

MACE GRIFFIN: BOUNTY HUNTER

What makes it great: The sense of freedom the game allows you to feel. Seamless transitions from space battles to FPS action give a real sense of a huge world that you inhabit.

MADDEN 2005

What makes it great: The best Madden so far, but that's a given. Brilliant graphics and silky smooth animation – but the presentation can't match ESPN NFL 2K5.

MASHED

What makes it great: Totally addictive multiplayer – make sure you've got a multitap. This is why you got into gaming to begin with.

MEDAL OF HONOUR: FRONTLINE

What makes it great: The opening level, the beach landing on Omaha, is perhaps one of the most atmospheric and moving game moments to date. Still one of the PS2's best shooters.

MEDAL OF HONOUR: RISING SUN

What makes it great: It's surprisingly short but it's got some pretty awe-inspiring moments. Escape a sinking battleship in Pearl Harbour, sink a Japanese aircraft carrier – all in a day's work.

METAL ARMS: GLITCH IN THE SYSTEM

What makes it great: It combined an explosive single-player experience that features a hilarious story with smashing multiplayer games. Need to know more?

MERCENARIES

What makes it great: An impeccably designed and action-packed sandbox of free-roaming combat. Steal choppers, jack tanks – Mercenaries is fun, fun, fun 'til the commies take you C4 away.

METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SONS OF LIBERTY

What makes it great: A must-own, state-of-the-art tactical espionage game that's reason enough to buy a PS2. A superbly paced, gripping story.

METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SNAKE EATER

What makes it great: It's the ultimate lone-soldier adventure, packed with riveting combat and a stunning jungle setting. Acquire immediately.

Your definitive guide to the ever-expanding library of PlayStation 2 games

MIDNIGHT CLUB 3: DUB EDITION	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: Rockstar has given you lots of ways to enjoy this game but no matter how you play it, it's quality from start to finish. Tuner cars, muscle cars, luxury cars, SUVs, superbikes, choppers – all faster than a greased cheetah.	
MIDWAY'S ARCADE TREASURES	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: The other arcade classics are good fun but it's really about <i>Root Beer Tapper</i> – hands-down the best simulation of serving beer to rowdy drunks ever.	
MORTAL KOMBAT: DECEPTION	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: Still a great fighter, despite a few rough edges. Multiple fatalities and environmental fatalities keep the gore to a maximum.	
MOTOGP4	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: A solid racer that covers a lot of bases, but <i>MotoGP5</i> will have to take it up a gear to stay in front.	
MX UNLEASHED	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: One of the best MX games on PS2. Huge freestyle countryside, great riding physics and addictive bonus vehicles like a stunt plane, Baja Buggy, monster truck and even a chopper. Spot on.	
NEED FOR SPEED: UNDERGROUND	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: 2 fast and 2 furious for the likes of most other street racers, the drag racing alone is worth the price of admission. Get in, buckle up, shut up and hang on!	
NEED FOR SPEED: UNDERGROUND 2	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: Bigger, badder and faster than its already impressive older brother, if the huge city and extra rides can't satisfy your need for speed we don't know what will.	
ONIMUSHIA 3: DEMON SIEGE	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: An epic time-travelling samurai adventure featuring everyone's favourite Frenchman Jean Reno. A classic in anyone's book.	
PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE SANDS OF TIME	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: It captures everything that made the original a classic and combines it with slick graphics, smooth gameplay and a hot chick to fight alongside you.	
PRINCE OF PERSIA: WARRIOR WITHIN	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: It's gone down a decidedly darker road than its enchanting predecessor but it still one of the best adventures money can buy.	
PROJECT SNOWBLIND	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: Kicks off with a bang and never lets up. Gob-smacking graphics, an explosive arsenal and consistently exiting and varied gameplay.	
PROJECT ZERO II: PROJECT BUTTERFLY	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: Quite possibly the scariest game ever made – <i>Project Zero II</i> plays superbly. Wear dark undies though.	
PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 4	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: If you enjoy sports games, especially long bouts of multiplayer tomfoolery – look no further. Best soccer action on PS2.	
PSI-OPS: THE MINDGATE CONSPIRACY	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: This psychic-charged jaunt takes the third-person shooter, levitates it into the air and makes it slap itself involuntarily.	
THE PUNISHER	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: Far more loyal to comic than it's celluloid sibling – bring on the bullets, break out the body bags and prepare for punishment. You won't regret it.	
RATCHET AND CLANK 2: LOCKED AND LOADED	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: The sheer number of the gadgets and crazy weapons alone would make this game worth playing. Hilarious fun.	
RATCHET AND CLANK 3: UP YOUR ARSENAL	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: The single player game is fantastic, but the online multiplayer mode puts most other shooters to shame. Great gadgets and humour abound.	
RED DEAD REVOLVER	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: A great spaghetti western shooter bursting with cool characters, duels and frontier towns, brilliant presentation and a sweet Sergio Leone-style soundtrack.	
RESIDENT EVIL CODE VERONICA X	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: Huge, scary and full of flesh-chewing zombies, <i>RE: CVX</i> still looks appetising after more than two years. No wonder gamers are already salivating for the next one.	
RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: What's the only enemy that's less popular than Nazis or zombies? You guessed it, <i>Zombified Nazis!</i> A slick shooter set during a very fictional part of WWII.	
REZ	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: Super-stylish retro-futuristic graphics, intense old-skool shoot-'em-up gameplay and pumping dance tracks from top artists which remix themselves as you play.	
RUGBY 2005	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: Minor AI quibbles aside, we've finally got a game of rugby that looks as good as other top-tier sports titles. About bloody time, too!	
RUGBY LEAGUE	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: League fans have long been neglected in the video game world, but no more – this captures all the action of the NRL in one satisfying package.	
SECOND SIGHT	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: Stylish, gripping and great fun. Possess your enemies, throw them around the room with your mind or just shoot 'em. Definitely worth looking into.	
SHADOW OF ROME	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: A superb realisation of bloody arena combat. Some of the maximus fun you can have with a sword. For those who are about to die – we salute you.	
SILENT HILL 3	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: One of the nastiest games on PS2 – arguably scarier than <i>Silent Hill 4</i> . We dare you to play it alone with the lights out.	
THE SIMPSONS: HIT AND RUN	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: When it comes to GTA rip-offs they don't get any more blatant than this, but walking around a living and breathing Springfield is so much fun that you won't care.	

THE SIMS: BUSTIN' OUT

What makes it great: It's slicker than the original Sims, and adds extra freedom for your little computer people. Being able to get out of the house means you'll be playing for even longer.

SINGSTAR

What makes it great: Karaoke with an edge – this gem will change your lounge room forever and give your significant other a reason not to loathe the PS2.

SINGSTAR PARTY

What makes it great: Another 30 songs to crucify and new multiplayer modes. It can even be used in conjunction with the first game.

SLY 2: BAND OF THIEVES

What makes it great: Great platforming for all ages. Plenty of substance, great visuals and offbeat characters. Well worth a look – especially for the younger set.

SOCOM II: US NAVY SEALS

What makes it great: Without a shadow of a doubt, the best Network Gaming title for the PS2. Unparalleled game modes and options mean the online warfare will rage for years.

SOUL CALIBUR II

What makes it great: It's the easiest fighting game to get into, but to be truly great will take years! The characters, weapons and the mind-blowing special moves are second to none.

SPIDER-MAN 2

What makes it great: A massive, free-roaming Manhattan complete with every major landmark – swing, jump, sprint and dive anywhere you want. Best superhero game ever.

SSX 3

What makes it great: It's one mountain with an avalanche of features. You decide whether you want to race against your arch-nemesis, hang out on the half-pipe or just explore.

STAR WARS: BATTLEFRONT

What makes it great: Live the battles from the Star Wars films on the front lines with weapons and vehicles from all the films so far. Need this game, you do.

SUPER MONKEY BALL DELUXE

What makes it great: Simple, enjoyable game design at its finest. And its multiplayer mode is the only way you can play with your mates' balls and still look them in the eye.

TEKKEN 4

What makes it great: Good looks. If *Tekken* was a girl she'd have Kylie Minogue's bon-bon and Shannon Elizabeth's jubbies.

TIGER WOODS: PGA TOUR 2005

What makes it great: The best golf game on PS2 – the single-player novelty may wear off but it's perfect when it's too wet for you and your mates to hit the greens.

TIME CRISIS 3

What makes it great: Namco's feverishly fast gunplay, cranked up a notch or 10. *TC3* is one of the first shooting games to successfully integrate a weapon switching function.

TIMESPLITTERS 2

What makes it great: The fastest, smoothest first-person shooter ever, complete with masses of challenges and link-up support for up to 16 players at once!

TIMESPLITTERS: FUTURE PERFECT

What makes it great: More fun than we thought possible. Super smooth, super stylish and the best reason yet to go online!

TOM CLANCY'S SPINTER CELL

What makes it great: The level of immersion the game creates. The stealth combined with the shadowy environs truly add up to an involving experience. Plus the gadgets rock!

TOM CLANCY'S SPINTER CELL: PANDORA TOMORROW

What makes it great: Adds a great multiplayer mode and a few new modes to the already brilliant package – it's just a little on the short side.

TOM CLANCY'S SPINTER CELL: CHAOS THEORY

What makes it great: Slick, stylish, and cooler than a Sugar Daddy, *Chaos Theory* is the best "pure" stealth game on the PS2. If you haven't got into the series yet, now is the time.

TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND

What makes it great: A huge Vice City-style playing area with more extreme skating and loads more missions to work through than previous *Hawk* games. And they were fantastic enough already!

TRUE CRIME: STREETS OF LA

What makes it great: Its lack of originality saw it labelled by some as simply *GTA: LA*, but the addition of intense John Woo-style shootouts make this a brilliant, if brief, roller coaster ride.

V8 SUPERCARS 2

What makes it great: Offensively good graphics, stunning real-time damage, great handling and our very own V8 Supercars and tracks – why don't you own this already?

VIRTUA FIGHTER 4 EVOLUTION

What makes it great: An amazingly intuitive, super-deep fighting system that uses three buttons in the best possible way so that fights are all based on reactions rather than memory.

WIPEOUT: FUSION

What makes it great: It's a face-meltingly fast, futuristic rollercoaster of a racing game from a series that modern gaming owes more to than some people realise. Enough said.

WRC 4

What makes it great: Besides carrying the official license, *WRC 4* also features authentic rally car handling, simple controls and some of the greatest rally courses this side of *Gran Turismo*.

WWE: SMACKDOWN! VS RAW

What makes it great: The best there is, the there was, and the best there ever shall be – at least, until the next *Smackdown!* of course.

XIII

What makes it great: The graphics actually use cel shading to great effect (for one of the only times ever). You feel as if you've wandered into a three-dimensional comic book.



The *Tenchi* series is

the ultimate case in point for the saying

"the original is always

the best". The original

Tenchi was a ninja

simulator. Before

Snake

Rikimaru was sneaking

in the shadows at night

with authentic ninja

tools like caltrops,

shurikens, smoke bombs and, er, poison rice. And the

executions were a work of art like the Mona Lisa... if it

was drenched in blood.

But what made *Tenchi* special was how it didn't just

stand there and point out every single step you had

to take. You were just dropped in there like a baby in

a ball pit and had to use your own instinct to get out



alive. The enemies ensured the gameplay wasn't as easy as getting to third base with Paris Hilton. Most of the time they patrolled in groups and if you were spotted by just one of them then you could expect an army bigger than the Salvation Army coming to donate an ass kicking to you. If all of these elements had been kept for the sequels then maybe more kids would be studying ninjutsu rather than 4 Unit maths. Such a shame. *Tenchi* still holds up to today's stealth standards. While the graphics are outdated, the game is still the best ninja game the world has seen. Definitely worth a second look.

LOVECHILD



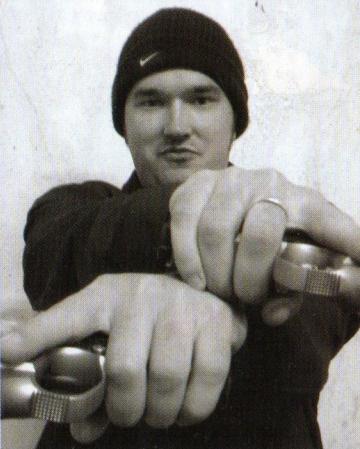
It was the beautiful marriage of the classic samurai film *Seven Samurai* and stealth action of *Metal Gear Solid*... even though it hadn't come out yet.





on the dvd

PLAYABLE DEMOS



Have you ever had that dream about being fighting in WWII but then being kidnapped by aliens who only want to sing like Robbie Williams and play with your monkey balls? Don't lie - you're amongst friends. Well, if you or a "friend of yours" has had this dream then the reason behind it is simple. You're just excited about our latest demos. Feel better now? This month Ubisoft leads the charge with its entry into the WWII genre - *Brothers In Arms*. Spielberg was extremely interested in this game when he saw it at E3 last year, so it's gotta be good. Australia's own *Destroy All Humans!* also shows the world how awesome Aussie developers are. We've been playing this in the office all week and it's such a stitch-up that you'll probably die most of the time because you're laughing so hard. Karaoke fans will be happy to know *SingStar* is back with some all new pop songs. We're sure you'll find something that will warm your vocal chords. Last, but not least, we have *Super Monkey Ball Deluxe*, which is sure to eat away at your time just like it has at OPS2 towers. We're just lucky we got the mag out on time. You can pinch your arm as much as you want, this is no dream. Go and get into these awesome demos right now.

You know it!

PAUL FREW

Staff Writer

PS To use this DVD, load it up on your PS2. Then scroll between games and rolling demos with the **↓** and **↑** keys. To choose within a section use **←** and **→**. Press **⊗** to start up your choice. Please note, you may have to reset your PS2 after some demos.

YOUR DISC

Every issue, *Official PlayStation 2 Magazine* brings you something no other magazine can - playable demos. Offering exclusive levels, tracks and missions, our playable DVD enables you to try the very latest PS2 games before you buy, often weeks, even months before release. Why risk your hard-earned cash on a \$100 game when you can try it out on our cover-mounted DVD? From *Burnout 3* and *MGS3* to *V8 Supercars 2* and *Jak 3*, we've always featured playable demos of the games that matter. Throw in top quality video footage of the hits of the future and our DVD is the best bargain on the shelves.

■ DISC PROBLEMS?

If your disc isn't working properly, simply send it back to this address for a replacement.

Demo Disc Returns

Official PlayStation 2 Magazine
P.O. Box 1037, Bondi Junction
NSW 1355

BROTHERS IN ARMS: ROAD TO HILL 30

DISTRIBUTOR: UBISOFT

GAME TYPE: FIRST-PERSON

SHOOTER

OUT: NOW

PLAYERS: 1

If you thought *Medal of Honour: Frontline* was the closest thing to *Saving Private Ryan* - try this out for size. This is the closest thing to a war experience that you'll get. In this demo you'll be given a quick tutorial explaining the command system and the controls, but it's not too long before you take out your first Kraut. From there on in it's about survival - use R3 to get a better shot at enemy soldiers and don't stop shooting until you see their carcass hit the ground - it's fast, visceral and you'll be FUBAR if you don't learn fast. *BIA* is not just about dead Nazis, there's a deep story to go along with it so make sure you watch all the cut-scenes so you can find out why it's so damn good.



DESTROY ALL HUMANS!

DISTRIBUTOR: THQ

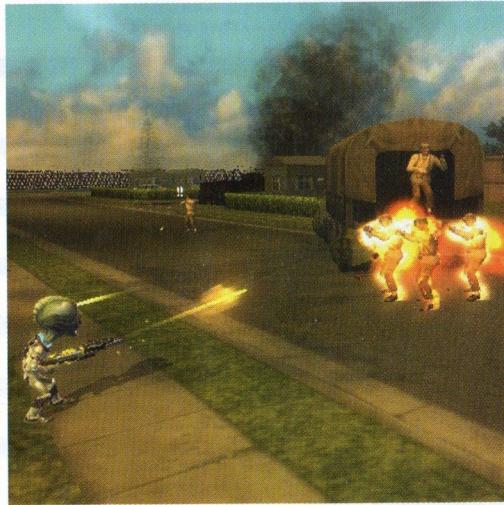
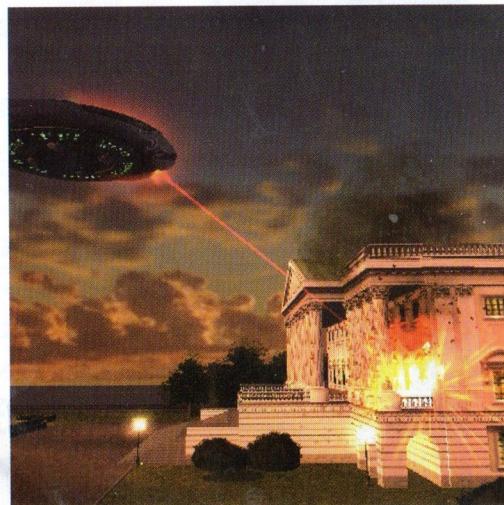
GAME TYPE: ACTION-

ADVENTURE

OUT: NOW

PLAYERS: 1

Destroy All Humans! is already in contention for not only Aussie game of the year but also funniest game of the century. You'll be playing the opening level of the game where Crypto is finding his feet on the planet he's determined to destroy. Expect to be throwing cows around like tennis balls, extracting brains from humans and turning all the buildings in sight into a pile of ashes. Try to play through the level as quickly as possible because the demo has a time limit on it. Treat it like an anal probe - in other words, just sit back and relax.



Other magazines let you watch, OPS2 lets you play

SINGSTAR POP

DISTRIBUTOR: SONY
GAME TYPE: PARTY
OUT: NOW
PLAYERS: 1-2

With *Australian Idol* ready to start up again soon, what better way to get into training than with a bit of *SingStar Pop*? The Aussie flavour (in the finished game) isn't selectable here but the massive demo does include pop favourites 'Let Me Entertain You' by Robbie Williams, 'Pieces of Me' by Ashlee Simpson, 'Somewhere Only We Know' by Keane, 'Sk8ter Boi' by Avril Lavigne and 'Main Offender' by The Hives. So if you want to impress Mark, Marcia and Kyle then you best start warming up those vocal chords right now if you want to be standing up there at the Opera House for the final this year. By the way, hang onto this demo if you fancy keeping Keane and The Hives around – it looks like they've been trimmed from the final game.



SUPER MONKEY BALL DELUXE

DISTRIBUTOR: THQ
GAME TYPE: PARTY
OUT: SEPTEMBER
PLAYERS: 1-2

This game is fast and furious. You can either play with your own balls or with a friend's in this demo. Then it's simply a matter of selecting your monkey, your track and hitting start. There's no acceleration or brake buttons here. Just push forward to go and back to stop. Try to pick up all the, er... pick-ups and drive over the speed boosts to get the edge on the competition. Don't try to get a lot of air either because you'll bruise your balls and it'll slow you down. The game is so addictively fun that it'll be the most fun you've had with balls since sex-ed.



Bonus gaming

Additional demos and videos for your gaming pleasure!

PLATINUM Burnout 3

If you haven't played this yet then close the magazine now and find out why it's still the most played game in the office. GO! We don't keep putting it on the disc for nothing!



Killzone

Just like a real war you'll be dropped into *Killzone* and expected to come out alive.



MotoGP 3

If you want to find out just how cool two wheels can be then treat it like a hot blonde and get it between your legs.

Prince of Persia: Warrior Within

With the new *POP* on its way, rediscover why the Prince is so pissed off.



ALSO FEATURED!

Beat Down
LA Rush
The Suffering: Ties That Bind
Alien Hominid
Resident Evil: Outbreak File 2

Next month

NEED FOR SPEED MOST WANTED

We pop the hood on 2005's
hottest racer!

Plus:

- Detailed breakdowns of the best PS3 games!
- The official verdict on *Tekken 5*!
- Behind-the-scenes with *King Kong*!



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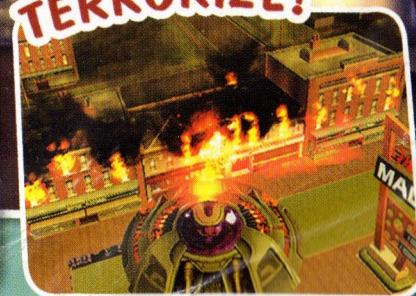
HYPNOTIZE!



VAPORIZE!



TERRORIZE!



PlayStation 2



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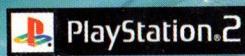
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your formation
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